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November 2001

NEA Today

The Magazine of the National Education Association

'We're All New Yorkers'

Educators from the nation's heartland—and around the world—reflect on September 11

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- Does It Matter How You're Dressed? p. 20
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November 2001

NEA Today

Volume 20 • Number 3

A/P Ted S. Warren

COVER STORY

Aftermath

page 8

NEA members in Kansas, Texas, Maryland, and Heidelberg, Germany relate how they and their students have dealt with the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy. Also, a report on the heroism of New York City educators, who evacuated children from the nine schools closest to the World Trade Center, including Stuyvesant High School (above).

Cover photo by Earl Richardson

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NEA Today

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NEA Today (ISSN 0734-7219) is published eight times a year, monthly, in September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May by the National Education Association, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to NEA Today, Attn: NEA Membership Records Address Change, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone: 202/822-7065. **Members:** To change address, see Reader Services box to the right.

NEA Today is mailed to all NEA members as a benefit of membership. Nonmember subscription price: $45 institutional, $80 domestic and foreign. For members, subscriptions represent $4 of annual dues.

Advertising within *NEA Today* is screened, but the publishing of any advertisement does not imply NEA endorsement of the product or views expressed.

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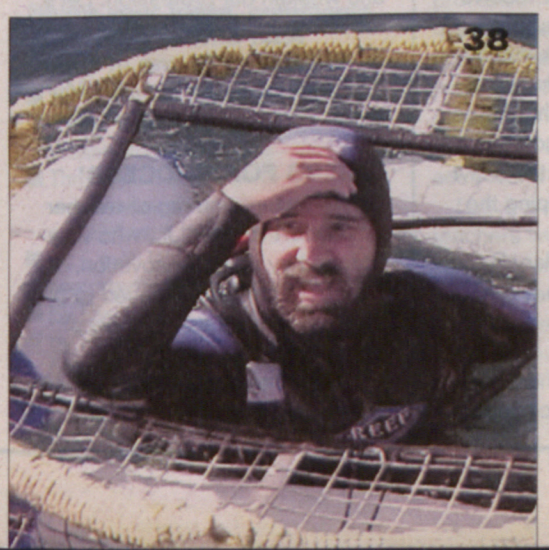

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Letters

HIGH-STAKES TESTING

I was so glad to see both Bob Chase and the National Teacher of the Year, Michele Forman speaking out about the misuse of standardized testing (President's Viewpoint and Interview, October).

We teachers know the value of testing. Without assessment, we could not adequately prescribe what our students need to learn next. However, using testing to hold teachers accountable is analogous to holding a dentist accountable for the number of patients who have cavities.

A child needs to learn according to his or her inner timetable. With high-stakes testing, all are expected to score at a certain level based on chronological age. In a kindergarten class I visited, the children were being instructed on letter writing. One was coloring on his board instead of making the correct letter. Not all five-year-olds are ready to learn letter formation, and forcing children to undertake tasks for which they are not ready can be extremely damaging.

There are educational companies that stand to make a great profit by introducing into our schools scripted curriculum where the teacher must read verbatim every word in the manual and every teacher in the grade level must be on the same page. This does not sound like school in the United States of America.

Gary Eisenberg
Vacaville, California

The whole testing rage is undermining our students' education. I'd like to pass along a saying I heard: "You can't fatten the pig by weighing it every week."

Mabel Adkins
Seattle, Washington

SECRETARY PAIGE

Secretary of Education Rod Paige (Interview, September) believes that teachers' pay should be based on results. He is referring to test scores, so our pay should be based on how well our students take tests.

This corporate model is ludicrous when applied to schools. If I ran a bread-making company, I would control as many factors as I could to make the best bread. I would buy only high-quality ingredients, and if one of my suppliers started sending lower-quality yeast or flour, I'd go to another supplier.

Children are our ingredients and the quality of their lives at home and in the world directly affects our output as teachers. We work with the students we are given, no matter what. I can't go to another supplier.

If my pay is based on the "results" Mr. Paige is looking for, then why would I want to teach the 14 ELD students in my class, the child who is falling behind because of the death of his father, the foster child who at the age of ten has only attended one full year of school, the ADHD child who has been denied medications by the insurance company, the child who is sleepy all the time because her family can't afford to run the heater at night. No test can measure all of the things we do for these suffering children when we comfort them and help them grow.

Heather Madla
Hollywood, California

Secretary Paige alleges that "all education should be funded and paid for by the state. There is no crisp line between public, private or religious." Like his Republican superiors, he ignores constitutions, state and federal.

Former Governor Voinovich of Ohio proved that when he conned the Ohio Assembly into providing vouchers for his religious schools. He was rewarded by being elected U.S. senator. That illegal act is now costing Ohio taxpayers millions.

Melvin Frank
Poland, Ohio

EMBARRASSING STUDENTS

I am truly appalled by Jarrad Grandy's method of dealing with students' unwanted behavior (Dilemma, October). No human being deserves to be embarrassed and belittled. Of course his students are silent every time he pulls out his cell phone. He has shamed these children into submission. His method is a lose-lose situation for everyone. Imagine the emotional distress experienced by the student being punished, and the discomfort of those forced to watch–not to mention the disruption of a parent's workday, and the wasted class time.

Sheana Thorell
Newmarket, New Hampshire

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

With regard to "Active Kids, Healthy Minds" (Health and Fitness, October): I just retired after 33 years of teaching physical education. This subject does not receive the recognition it deserves. Also, for some reason, people think that anyone can teach physical education. Many are surprised that I had to go to college and the tough courses I took. A little well-constructed activity goes a long way to keeping the entire body healthy.

Mary Beving
San Diego, California

TOUGHER JOB?

As a kindergarten teacher, I'd like to offer my thoughts on higher pay for tougher schools (Debate, October). Kindergarten teachers spend countless hours after school in conferences and on the phone stilling parents fears and responding to their concerns about sending their babies out into the world. We are often the "bad guys," too, since many times we're the first one to tell a parent that the little angel living in their home may be the devil in disguise.

It takes a special person to work with hormones, gangs, and the vast needs of "normal" teenage life. Likewise, it takes a special person to teach how to blow your nose, use scissors, squeeze glue, button jackets, find buses, and tie shoes. But I don't deserve more pay for doing them.

What about students with severe asthma? You're constantly analyzing every cough to catch the next episode before it lands the child in intensive care. But still I teach without deserving higher pay.

For teachers to try to "out-worst" each other does nothing but divide and weaken our profession. Let's focus on higher pay for all areas of education.

Linda Morgan
Enterprise, Alabama

'DRESS FOR SUCCESS'

The picture you ran of teacher Robert Howard Jr., who was stopped by police (Innovation, October), can also be used to provide a positive lesson for his students: dress for success.

It is an inconvenience to be pulled over by the police. Would the proba-

Becky Heavner

WRITING AS PUNISHMENT

Teresa Livermore (Dilemma, October) described strategies she uses to address misbehavior. She holds one-on-one conferences with misbehaving students to discuss the choices that lead to negative outcomes. This is a strong idea. It lets students know that you care about them and provides a personal connection from which you may discover the roots of the misbehavior.

I was troubled, however, to read, "If the class becomes so unmanageable that students aren't learning, I have them... write. This works well because most students don't want to write."

When disciplinary actions are needed, please refrain from using writing itself as a punishment. Instead, consider having the students write on a particular subject that relates to the source of your frustration. Ask them to reflect on what they observed in the classroom. They should be able to point out the good and the bad and come up with suggestions about what they might do differently, if given the chance.

Brett Meteyer
Haslett, Michigan

Editor's note: *NEA Today* received a dozen letters criticizing the use of singing as punishment, as well as several saying writing should not be a punishment.

bility decrease if he dressed differently?

If his intention was to have a better rapport with his students, can he don his "relaxed" look after school?

The teaching profession should show as much professionalism as possible. One way is to dress for success!

As my husband reviewed your article, he had made the comment that since he camouflaged himself in gang-style attire, he shouldn't be alarmed when he is treated as such. After all, when the communities want the police to combat gangs, identifying the enemy is the first step.

Liz Westbrook
San Bernadino, California

NORTH DAKOTA PAY

The North Dakota Education Association may deserve kudos for conducting a valiant fight for increasing teacher salaries (News, September), but the state legislature should be ashamed of the outcome. Setting beginning teacher salaries at a minimum of $18,500 is deplorable. I left that state in 1988 at age 40 because of the poor economic conditions. I feared that my own children would face an even bleaker future.

The cost of living is not lower in North Dakota, as many people will claim when offering these low salaries. I've paid the enormous heating bills, purchased two winter coats for my kids every year (one for cold and one for extreme cold), and watched the electric bill rise because the car had to be plugged in all night to keep that battery warm. It's a great place to live if you have money to travel to Hawaii or Vegas in the winter. Teachers don't have that kind of money.

California teachers begin at a minimum of $34,000, which is still low when compared to other professions.

Raising admissions standards in North Dakota will not increase teacher salaries (Debate, September). Supply and demand will, as it has in California. It doesn't cost much to rent a U-haul, and these new grads may find that the people in California are even nicer than the weather.

Linda Ishigaki
Yuba City, California

NOT ALL LIBERALS

I disagree with William Bennett's letter in the September issue. He would probably be surprised at how many of his fellow teachers are not "old dyed-in-the-wool liberals" as he proclaims to be—especially here in the South.

Remember: We conservatives are also long-time, dues-paying members.

Alan Kent
Sebring, Florida

McDONALD'S

I was quite perturbed by the snide remark about McDonald's foods in the first review of books about teacher grants (Resources, May). For many years McDonald's stores around the country have been real partners to the public schools, and indeed, they have been exhibitors at RA. It was a cute remark by a reviewer trying to make his review worth reading–it wasn't!

James Eisenhardt
Omaha, Nebraska

FAIRNESS TO PRESIDENT

Search as I might in the October issue, I was unable to find even one tiny photo or mention of the name of our president, President George W. Bush, who has made education a top priority in our country. And how can you deny the president's wife, Laura Bush, as much as a word when she has made education a goal of hers as First Lady. Where are your priorities? Where is your sense of decency and respect and willingness to place credit where credit is due?

Bill and Ida Frizzell
Amherst, Wisconsin

REAL TEACHERS

If we could take some of Michael Thomas's beliefs along with some of Barbara Hawk's perceptions (Debate, September) as to who should and should not enter the field of teaching, we would have the perfect answer to providing the best teachers.

So much of what we do in our profession cannot be measured quantitatively; so much of what we do is based on our love of our profession. It can't be measured by any other means than our successful youth who are ready to enter the adult world and work force.

I have always believed that "real" teachers will, in the end, be the true survivors amid all the negatives we must sometimes tolerate, because we care first and foremost for our children, our students.

Lloyd David Ball
Morley, Michigan

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

- By mail: Write to Letters, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036
- Through the Web: Go to www.nea.org/neatoday and click on "Submit a Letter to the Editor"
- By E-mail: Write to neatoday@nea.org
- By Fax: 202/822-7206
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Letters are edited for length and clarity.

President's Viewpoint

BY BOB CHASE

One Nation, Unbowed

We teach the values that make America strong.

September 11 was a day of horror—and heroes. Among the heroes were our colleagues in public schools close to the World Trade Center. As the towers collapsed, engulfing nearby schools in black clouds of smoke and grit, these teachers, principals, and support professionals risked their lives leading their students to safety.

The New York Times reported that as teachers led their six- and seven-year-old pupils into the street, one child saw burning bodies falling from the tower and cried out, "Look, the birds are on fire." Said the *Times*: "Taking some students by the hand and carrying others on their shoulders, the teachers plunged through the rubble-filled streets that were clogged with adults running for their lives." Thanks to our colleagues' courage and discipline, every child was saved.

Other newspapers noted the skill and grace of school staff all across America who shepherded their students through that terrible day. I have never been more proud to be a public school educator.

As a social studies teacher, I also appreciate that this was the ultimate "teachable moment." And what was the instant lesson plan for thousands of teachers? Our most important civics lesson: America is defined not by its wealth and abundance, but by our freedom, our liberties, our commitment to an open, tolerant, democratic society—a society that refuses to live in fear.

Our public schools will be on the frontline in this new era.

As President Bush said, the terrorists attacked America because they despise our values. We will defeat this enemy by arms and law, but also by holding fast to the values that define us as Americans.

Our public schools will be on the frontline in this new era. It is our challenge to guide young Americans to understand the freedom and democratic ideals that are at stake.

Our schools are superbly suited to this task. For two centuries, they have been preservers and transmitters of America's ideals; we are "culturally conservative" in the literal, non-ideological sense. We have taught generation after generation of native-born and immigrant students to understand and respect America's core values.

In first grade, our students are taught to pledge allegiance to "one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." For 12 years, through study of American history, literature, and government, they are shaped into citizens.

I am always taken aback when I hear folks say that our schools should return to teaching values. We never stopped teaching values. We teach them explicitly, and more important, we model values. Everything we do and say in front of our students is a values statement—and those values include the all-American values of honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, and love of country.

Public schools also stress one other value that is especially urgent today: tolerance and respect for people of different colors, cultures, and faiths. In our most diverse public schools, teaching students to cooperate and excel in a multicultural setting is a powerfully important lesson. As a student at one high school in northern Virginia told me: "We all get along–all of us. If anyone tried to act prejudiced or to hurt someone, the other kids just wouldn't allow it."

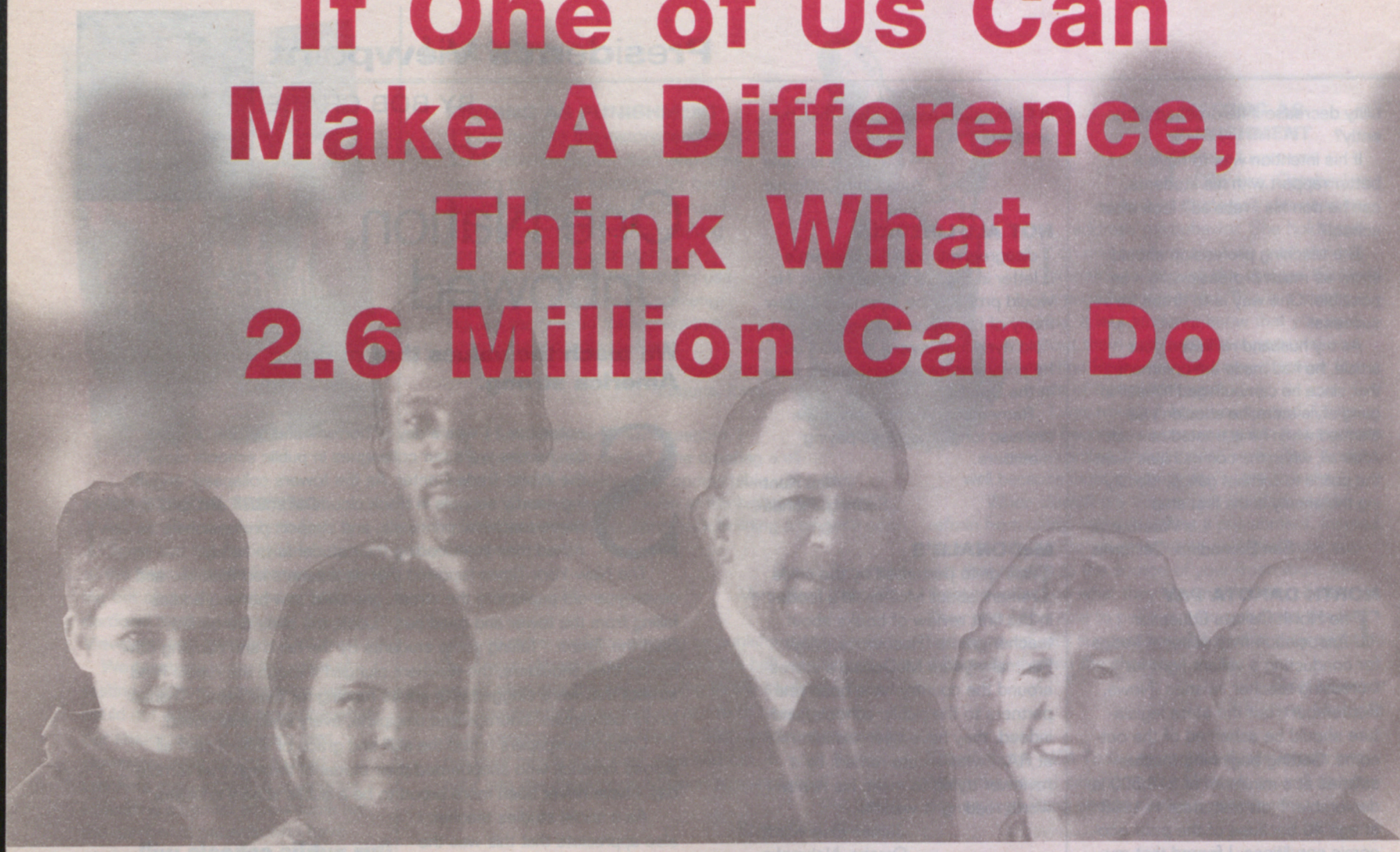
This student may not realize it, but she is a combatant in the world's struggle against terror and hate. So are her teachers.

The success of America's domestic security will depend on more than metal detectors and sky marshals. It also will depend on the values taught in America's public schools.

We are ready.

Comments? E-mail Bob Chase at BobChase@nea.org.

If One of Us Can Make A Difference, Think What 2.6 Million Can Do



Keep guns out of our schools—Stand up and be counted

In 32 states, criminals and kids can walk into a gun show and buy a firearm. No background check. No ID. No questions asked. And 40,000 guns come into our schools every year.

What can one person, one of us, do about that?

Well, there's a bill before Congress right now that would change this. The McCain/Lieberman Gun Safety Bill is a bi-partisan measure that will close the gun show loophole by requiring background checks for all sales at gun shows. That means fewer guns in the wrong hands.

But the powerful gun lobby is fighting against it, and they are very well organized.

That's why the NEA is teaming up with Americans for Gun Safety to stand up to the gun lobby and help pass this important legislation.

AGS believes that gun rights come with gun responsibilities—like keeping guns away from criminals and children, and promoting responsible gun ownership. And working with the men and women of the NEA, we have the power to make a difference.

Call Congress and the President and help us pass the McCain/Lieberman Gun Safety Bill.

Go to www.americansforgunsafety.com and Click on "Take Action."

Call Congress at 202-224-3121.

Call the President at 202-456-1414.

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WORKING TO KEEP KIDS SAFE.

americansfor gunsafety

A Time for Reason and Respect

A Seattle teacher has heard people talk about the parallels between the terrorist attacks and Pearl Harbor, and this has her worried.

BY ELAINE AKAGI

Ellen Banner

Seattle teacher Elaine Akagi hopes that education will keep Americans from blaming all Arab Americans for the terrorist attacks.

As a child growing up back in the '50s and '60s, I often heard my parents and their friends talking about "camp." I never knew what "camp" was, but assumed it was a normal part of growing up.

Later, much later, I learned that it was in fact an unpleasant part of their young lives. Now, I understand that the "camps" were places in the desert, far from civilization, where 120,000 Japanese-Americans, most of them American citizens, were interned following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

It was a dark time in the history of the United States. It was a time when people were judged unfairly, solely on race, and tens of thousands of Americans paid with their freedom.

On September 11, 2001, the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon near Washington, DC, reminded many of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

When I heard radio and TV reporters likening the day's events to December 7, I had a sickening feeling in my stomach. What if, I wondered, the same hysteria resulted in the internment of people of Middle Eastern descent.

Then I thought, *no*, the United States government learned from their mistakes. President Bush would not let this happen.

It's been heartening to hear officials, from the federal level on down to local government, reminding the citizens that just because a person looks a certain way doesn't mean that that person is somehow related to "the enemy."

I've been very disturbed by the reports that people who look a certain way have been attacked and even killed. Others have been harassed or threatened.

What was even more disturbing was a report that a member of Congress referred to "people who wear diapers on their heads with a fanbelt wrapped around the diaper" in a public statement.

Of course, he apologized for making the racist statement. But the comment was made and had been heard by the public, and the damage had been done.

What have been heartening are statements made by young people, such as the one in a letter written to the *Seattle Times* reminding people not to let the events following the attack on Pearl Harbor happen again.

It tells me that our work at the Japanese American Citizens League and the curriculum guide we developed [see below for details] have made an impact.

The history books don't say much about the Japanese-American internment. There's a paragraph or two, referring to that part of American history. That's why we encourage the use of our curriculum guide and the teacher trainings we provide.

Younger students who have heard the stories, through lessons provided by their teachers, of the trauma and heartache suffered by the families who lived along the West Coast and were forcibly moved to camps hundreds of miles away are aware of wrongs the government inflicted.

Those older students who study the Constitution have learned that our government violated the constitutional rights of citizens.They've also learned that our government was big enough to apologize and make reparations to the victims' families.

When students find out about

the ostracism and shame Japanese-Americans were subjected to during the 1940s and 1950s, they learn a precious lesson about the importance of diversity and the dangers of intolerance.

And this lesson has tragically become all the more relevant in light of the September 11 attack.

Elaine Akagi is a veteran of 35 years in the classroom in Detroit and Seattle. She currently works in the Seattle schools visual impairment program. Akagi's E-mail address is eakagi@seattleschools.org.

For the past four years, she's helped to develop the Japanese American Citizens League's curriculum guide for use in elementary through high schools. Information about how to order the curriculum guide is available in the education section of the JACL Web site at www.JACL.org.

The *NEA Today* staff struggled with what to include in this issue about the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Our October issue had already gone to press and would be delivered to members' homes by the end of September.

This issue—the November issue—was already partially written and designed; we'd intended our cover story to be about parental involvement, coinciding with American Education Week, November 11-17.

Bill Fischer
editor

We tried to advance our thinking to early November, when you receive this issue. After six weeks of non-stop, often overwhelming, coverage in the media, what should our approach be to this story?

You see the results in these pages. We decided that our members would like to know how their colleagues, not only here, but in other countries as well, handled the discussions of the terrorist attacks in their own classrooms.

So, we went to the heartland first, and the social studies classroom of Kansas NEA member Norm Conard. He has a reputation for challenging his students to acquire knowledge of events and people way beyond the confines of Uniontown, Kansas, a town of 300.

We also sought the perspective of New York City teachers whose schools near the World Trade Center were most affected by the tragedy.

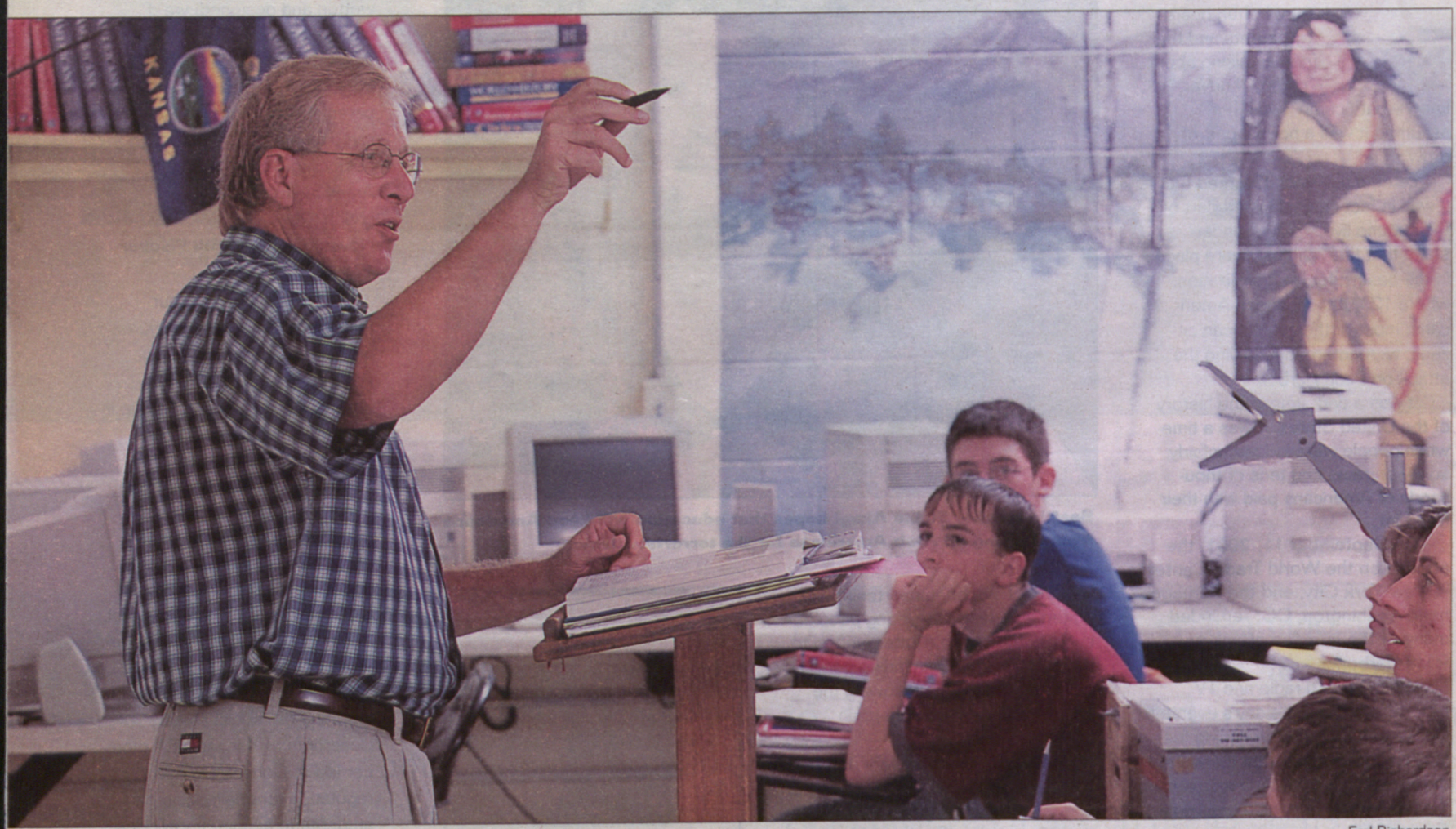
We asked school nurse Laura Bauernfeind, who works at Heidelberg American High in Germany, for her perspective. Texas teacher Elizabeth Fourzan E-mailed her thoughts from her school in El Paso.

Tolerance and appreciation for diversity were also key to our coverage, so we asked Maryland teacher Wafa Hozien and Seattle teacher Elaine Akagi for their thoughts. To all who helped us tell this painful story, thanks.

Bill Fischer

Aftermath

America's educators reflect on the impact of September 11.



Norm Conard

Earl Richardson

'We're All New Yorkers'

UNIONTOWN, KANSAS

Uniontown is more than a thousand miles away from New York City, both literally and figuratively. It's in the heart of rural America. Our high school has 150 students, all of them Caucasian and Protestant.

Yet on September 11, our students became one with the children of Arlington, Virginia and New York City.

They sought solace in patriotism, prayed around the flagpole, and listened to teachers and parents trying to calm their fears. And students who had previously shown little interest in subjects like government and social studies now had question after question.

How could I help them put these horrific events into some context? I employed many teaching strategies that first week. I used maps and charts to pinpoint governments, peoples, and religions. I compared FDR's speech from December 8, 1941 with President Bush's speech September 11. But that fell flat.

One student in my government class said he had heard another say, "Let's destroy all of the Arabs." That led to small group discussions to face the lack of tolerance that sometimes arises. We discussed what the perpetrators of this horrible deed wanted—and how intolerance was their motive and goal, not ours.

Class discussions centered on terms and names such as Arab, Muslim, Osama bin Laden, and international terrorists. At first, only about a quarter of the students could find major Middle Eastern countries on a blank map—and I wonder whether students elsewhere could have done better.

My most effective tool was personal E-mail. Two years ago, my students began a world history project about the Holocaust that included a trip to Warsaw. After September 11, we received messages from our contacts in Poland, who helped us see the attacks from other perspectives.

My students have a lot to learn—indeed, we all do. But since the disaster, they have gained a better understanding of the international role of the United States. And our messages from abroad have brought home the global, and human, scope of this event.

Heading home to the farm from football practice, one of my students echoed an sentiment from an E-mail from one of our Jewish friends in Poland: "We're all New Yorkers." ✔

Norm Conard
Uniontown High School

'All Differences Are Tossed Overboard'

HEIDELBERG, GERMANY

Department of Defense Dependents Schools provide a quality American public education to 71,000 children of the U.S. armed forces serving abroad. The Federal Education Association represents more than 6,100 educators in the 154 schools located in 14 countries. Laura Bauernfeind is a school nurse at Heidelberg American High School, which has 700 students.

We're very concerned about our students. They are just as worried as other students in the U.S. about terrorism—with one exception. They realize that their mothers and fathers may have to respond with their lives in any retaliation action. In some cases, both parents may be deployed or placed on extended duty to defend our interests overseas. Single parents can be deployed, leaving high school students with little supervision and support.

Joan Alles

Laura Bauernfeind

Many of our educators are military spouses, and they have double fears.

Counseling groups in the schools are organized to assist students during times of high stress. Increased stress often leads to increased incidents of child abuse, alcohol abuse, and stress-related illnesses. With decreased staffing in the American military facilities, overseas referrals must often be made to local host nation medical providers—and trying to communicate in the local language adds one more stress.

But recent events have changed our relationship to the world around us. On Septem-ber 14, we went back to school for the first time. A nearby German school asked if we would send a group of students to the front of Campbell Barracks, the Army Headquarters for Europe, to receive flowers and condolences from the German school community. So ten students, our principal, and our Association faculty representative went out.

They found more than 450 German students linked arm in arm, bringing candles, flowers, and handwritten messages. Our students never expected such an outpouring of sympathy and support. Michael Arnold, the editor of our student newspaper, reported that students on both sides were in tears. He's quoted in the local paper, *Rhein Neckar Zeitung*, as saying the gesture was extraordinarily moving. And he told that the event made him realize we have friends in Germany.

One of the German students said, "All differences in nationality and race are tossed overboard. People just want to help each other." ✔

Laura Bauernfeind
Heidelberg American High School

Courtesy of *Rhein Neckar Zeitung*

Students from Heidelberg American High School in Germany receive support and condolences from local German students. Student Michael Arnold (far right) told school nurse Laura Bauernfeind they now realize "we have friends in Germany."

'Yes, The Reality Had Sunk In'

EL PASO, TEXAS

I was devastated when I first watched the attacks on the World Trade Towers on a school television. Who did this? Why? I was speechless. But not all of my students shared my emotions—and that upset me, too.

My first class of 35 freshmen had a variety of reactions, including relief at not having to work and having a free day. I had someone lower the volume on the television and then slowly explained that we are witnessing history. This will be a day they will always remember.

As we watched the clips, I reminded them that this was not a special effect or a video game. Then came the questions. I told them I wasn't sure about anything. We watched the television in silence and left the class in silence.

During the day, some of my students began to forget about the events. To some, there was still indifference.

Then I told them about the possibility of war. I told them about the draft during the Vietnam War, and I told them that this was going to be their war, only we didn't know what kind of war it would be. These 14-, 15- and 16-year-old boys became silent.

I was angry with some of their reactions. I thought they realize the severity of this situation. But I was wrong.

One week after the bombing, I had all my students write essays on the attack, describing their thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears. I said I'd save the essays and give them back in May 2002 so they can reflect on this very important time.

A lump came in my throat as I read these essays. "On September 11, 2001, America was stabbed in the heart," wrote one student.

Some were angry and vowed revenge, others were sad and prayed for answers, still others were scared and prayed for their families, and others donated blood and money. The compassion that poured out for the victims of this disaster set my mind at ease. Even the most hardened boys spoke of loving their families and hoping that neither they nor their brothers would have to go to war.

Paul Tañedo

Elizabeth Fourzan

Yes, the reality had sunk in. We talk now about becoming informed so that we can better understand the players. We have resumed our daily grammar lessons. I hope they see the bigger picture and they realize they can make a difference in this world. I see a generation of students who desire peace. I hope and pray it will happen. ✔

Elizabeth Fourzan
Montwood High School

Justice For All

Educators support Muslim colleague.

Scott Suchman

When social studies teacher Wafa Hozien found out that hijacked planes were smashing into buildings on September 11, her first reaction was horror at the loss of life. And her second was, "Please don't let it be Arabs, don't let it be Muslims."

Hozien, a Muslim born in Libya, has lived in the United States since she was eight. She teaches at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School in Bethesda, Maryland. And she knew that when President Bush named Osama bin Laden on television, her world—or the world's presumptions about her—would change.

The attack on the Pentagon closed most schools in the Washington, D.C. area for a day and a half. When her school reopened, Hozien took part in a school-wide discussion, giving students background on the Taliban and on Osama bin Laden. Some of her students wanted to talk more about the disaster. Others said they were "all discussed out." No one at school has pointed the finger of blame at Wafa.

But the world off-campus hasn't been so supportive. Hozien's mosque was vandalized, and mosque leaders have decided it's too dangerous for women to worship there just now. In a playground, two people sitting near Hozien said, speaking loudly so she could hear, that Arabs in the United States should be put in internment camps, like Japanese-Americans were during World War II.

"I thought it was ironic," says Hozien. "My children and their children were playing together on the swings." But she didn't challenge them for fear of being attacked.

Then she heard a radio report that a majority of Americans favor making Arabs carry special identification cards. "I got to school practically in tears," she says. A colleague who is Jewish had also been upset by the report. "We talked about the parallels to the Nazi treatment of Jews," says Hozien, "and she told me, 'I understand 100 percent what you're going through.'"

Other NEA members who are Muslim or Arab American have reported to *NEA Today* that their colleagues and students have stood with them against retaliation in their communities. Educators across the country have also tried to stop harassment of Arab American and Muslim students. ✔

Q&A

Dispelling Myths

Excerpted and reprinted with permission from The Seattle Times

Before the flames from the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were extinguished, many Americans already had an image of the culprit: someone with Middle Eastern features, someone of Islamic faith, someone with a seething hatred of America.

The primary suspect, Osama bin Laden, fits that description. Sadly, though, some people in this country assume that anyone who looks like their image of an Arab is worth targeting for retribution.

The result of that assumption has been violent and ugly.

One man stormed into a South Seattle mosque and threatened to burn it down. Another poured gasoline on a North Seattle mosque and tried to fire a gun at some of its members.

Below are some questions and answers to enlighten and educate. Much of the material here comes from A Guide for Journalists *produced by* The Detroit Free Press, *a newspaper published in a city with one of the nation's largest populations of Arab Americans.*

Q: Who are Arab Americans?
A: Arab Americans are U.S. citizens and permanent residents who trace their ancestry to, or who emigrated from, Arabic-speaking places in southwestern Asia and northern Africa, a region known as the Middle East. Not all people in this region are Arabs. Most Arab Americans were born in the United States.

Q: How many Arab Americans are there?
A: Estimates vary because the U.S. Census does not use Arab American as a classification. Most estimates put the number at about 3 million.

Q: Where do Arab Americans live?
A: They live in all 50 states. The population centers are Detroit, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago.

Q: Do Arabs have a shared language?
A: The Arabic language is one of the great unifying characteristics of Arab people. Even so, there are many different dialects, and people from some regions have difficulty understanding those from some others. Modern Standard Arabic is used in formal letters, books, and newspapers.

Not all Arab Americans know Arabic, of course, as many are second-, third- and fourth-generation Americans.

Q: Do Arabs have a shared religion?
A: No. They belong to many religions, including Islam, Christianity, Druze, Judaism, and others. It's a common misperception to think that Arab traditions are Islamic, or that Islam unifies all Arabs. Yes, most Arabs around the world are Muslim. But more Arab Americans are Christian than are Muslim.

Q: But isn't Islam mostly an Arab religion?
A: No. Only about 12 percent of the estimated 1 billion Muslims worldwide are Arabs. There are more Muslims in Indonesia, for example, than in all Arab countries combined.

Q: What do Muslims believe?
A: Muslims, followers of Islam, follow five basic precepts:

- There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet.
- Followers should pray five times a day, facing Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia that is the holiest place.
- They should give alms to the poor.
- They should fast during the holy month of Ramadan.
- And they should make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Q: Is Islam a violent religion?
A: The Koran teaches nonviolence. Throughout history, political groups and leaders have used Islam and other religions to justify many things, including violence.

Q: What race are Arab Americans?
A: They may have white skin and blue eyes, olive or dark skin and brown eyes. Hair textures differ. The United States has, at different times, classified Arab immigrants as African, Asian, white, European, or as belonging to a separate group.

Q: Are Arabs an official minority group?
A: The U.S. government does not classify Arabs as a minority group for purposes of employment and housing.

Q: Who are some well-known Arab Americans?
A: Here are just a few:

- Christa McAuliffe, the teacher/astronaut who died aboard the space shuttle Challenger.
- Indy 500 winner Bobby Rahal.
- Heisman Trophy winner and NFL quarterback Doug Flutie.
- Radio celebrity Casey Kasem.
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving founder Candy Lightner.
- Jacques Nasser, president and chief executive officer of Ford Motor Co.
- U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham.

AP/Ted S. Warren

On September 24, police and other rescue workers pause as one of the largest flags in New York City is hung from Stuyvesant High School, located near the World Trade Center.

To Safety

Educators shepherd students through chaos.

Among the heroes of September 11 were the educators of lower Manhattan who guided students out of the nine schools that were evacuated. New York City educators, members of the American Federation of Teachers, offer their accounts.

Public school teachers walked—and sometimes carried—terrified grade-school children to safety. Some of them were new teachers only four days at their jobs who hadn't even experienced a fire drill.

"We didn't know what was going on," one United Federation of Teachers member said. "Was it safer inside or outside? We moved the kids from the cafeteria to the gym to the basement."

At PS 89, teacher James Herlihy kept kids quiet and shouted, "Keep moving!" even as the second tower in the shadow of their school crumbled almost before their eyes.

"We all just did our jobs," Herlihy said. Then, in a rare light moment, he added that the junior high school kids fully recognized how serious things were because "when I yelled for quiet in the cafeteria, it was quiet. That never happens."

❖❖❖

At PS 42, Virginia Eng's class of fourth graders, intent on studying English as a second language, saw the attack. "One student asked why Superman didn't come and help to hold up the building," Eng said. "When we came out, it was like a great monster moving toward us—a great cloud of smoke and debris."

❖❖❖

At the Sun Yat Sen School on Hester Street, IS 131, paraprofessional Marion Thom was helping to register new students who spoke only Chinese. "We heard this big noise, but we just went about our business," said Thom. "And then later we felt the vibration, and somebody came in and told us a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center."

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From many of the classrooms at PS 89, "The children could actually see the first plane hit," said UFT chapter leader Rachel Zindler.

"We evacuated after the first building fell. We were about seven blocks up the highway when the second building collapsed. We turned around, and watched, and screamed."

Two children who were unable to go home with family members spent the night with a teacher. Happily, their parents were able to track them down, and each child said goodnight to their parents on the phone before going to bed. ✔

This coverage is from the Web site of the AFT's state affiliate, New York State United Teachers (www.nysut.org), and used with permission.

NEAFT September 11 Fund

The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have established an NEAFT September 11 Fund to provide long-range assistance to the children and affected families of the victims who were killed on that most terrible of days.

The Fund will support these people in a number of ways, including helping them pay for their college education. NEA and AFT have committed $200,000 each to start up this fund.

NEA state and local Associations, as well as individual NEA members, are welcome to contribute. Checks made out to the NEAFT September 11 Fund can be sent to NEA (attention Dennis Van Roekel), 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Resources

● NEA's nine-part school safety video series, ***The Safe Schools Now Network,*** includes four programs that can help educators cope with possible after-effects on the job in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks:

Episode 6: Violence-Related Stress
See what some schools are doing to help defuse aggression. In one segment, school staff recount their personal experiences with violence-related stress. Produced in collaboration with the U.S. Center for Mental Health Services.

Episode 7: Dealing with Hate & Bias in School
Learn about effective ap-proaches—including "Anytown," an immersion program developed by the National Council for Community and Justice, and the innovative "Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders" curriculum.

Episode 8: Building Skills to Manage Student Anger
Watch techniques that help students channel anger in useful ways, including the elementary school "I Can Problem Solve" curriculum and peer mediation programs in middle and high schools.

Episode 9: Mind Over Media
With Al Roker, see how critical viewing skills are taught at elementary, middle, and high schools around the country. A co-production with Court TV in collaboration with Cable in the Classroom.

$14.95 per program for NEA members ($115 for the nine-part series), and a discussion and resource guide is included. To order, contact the NEA Professional Library at 800/229-4200 or online at www.nea.org/books.

Visit www.safeschoolsnow.org for the discussion and re-source guides and other materials.

● NEA's ***Crisis Comunications Guide and Toolkit*** **can help your Association respond fast in an emergency, with suggestions on what to do on Day One and every day thereafter, general strategy, and generic press releases you can customize. It's at www.nea.org/crisis.**

● **For more on how NEA members can help their students and their colleagues deal with stress during crises, see this month's Health and Fitness section on pages 36 and 37.**

"I teach with iMovie."

When it came to teaching his students about immigration, Marco Torres, a high school social studies teacher in Los Angeles, had a different idea. "Our school is 99% Latino and I wanted the students to realize that their family experiences were just as important as those of the Europeans who came through Ellis Island." So Marco asked his students to interview their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles on digital video to chronicle their own family journeys to the

"They became the producers of their own stories. The writer, the editor, the director – some even became the actors."

Marco Torres,
High School Social Studies Teacher

"They invited their families to come and see these very personal movies. That night there wasn't a dry eye in the entire room."

United States. The students then edited their footage with iMovie.™ And the results were simply incredible. "About a week into the project they got so involved that their grade became insignificant. The most important thing was their story. It was wonderful because I got to see all the skills that corporate America and higher academia are looking for – teamwork, collaboration, problem-solving, being agile and thinking on their feet." To see how this inspiring project helped Marco strike a chord with his students and to learn more about how you can use iMovie to enhance your own lesson plan, visit www.apple.com/teachimovie or call 1-800-800-APPL.

"iMovie helped me make an impact on these kids' lives. And that's something I want to do every day."

Think different.

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"We're Worth It!"

Paraeducators in Ithaca, New York push for a living wage.

Her ten years of experience shine through when Debi Petersen Moore takes you through her workday at Cayuga Heights Elementary in Ithaca, New York, one of America's top districts.

When she and other teacher aides aren't exercising "total supervision" of students in the lunchroom, playground, halls, or bus loading area, Moore is working as the "equal partner" of kindergarten teacher Margaret Philipson.

So low is para pay in the Ivy League town of Ithaca that many ESP must work two or three jobs to survive. These NEA local leaders are taking their story public and gaining lots of support.

The two collaborate to teach the kids math and reading skills, songs, and everything else there is to impart to kindergartners. So trusting is the arrangement that Philipson often asks her partner for advice, like who shouldn't be seated next to whom.

In the lunchroom, Moore teaches students about both money and nutrition. She also shares life skills and love with kids who pick up neither at home.

Moore's ready for the couch by the end of her taxing day, but she can't afford to relax. Her annual salary of $10,134 forces this single mother of two to work outside jobs, everything from waitressing to babysitting.

Second and third jobs are a "touchy subject" for Ithaca's poorly paid education support professionals, says Title I teaching assistant Debbie Minnick, president of the 200-member Ithaca Paraprofessionals Association (IPA).

"Some of our members are on partial public assistance," Minnick reveals, "and some people even call me and ask, 'Can the union give me enough money to get through to Friday?'"

Photos by Tim McKinney

Teacher aide Debi Petersen Moore makes $10,134 after ten years on the job. "We're ready to do whatever it takes" to win a living wage, she says.

Going Public

Talking publicly about one's own poverty wages, especially in an upscale Ivy League oasis like Ithaca, isn't a comfortable thing to do, but IPA members like Moore are doing it extremely well.

They've informed residents of this high-cost community that more than two-thirds of all full-time Ithaca paraeducators earn less than $13,000 a year.

What's worse, one-quarter of the full-timers make less than $10,000.

And with these sorry statistics in hand, the local is conducting an innovative contract campaign focusing on just one goal, a "living wage."

A living wage is defined as the amount of income and resources (such as health benefits) needed for a family to adequately meet basic needs without public or private assistance.

IPA members have taken an Ithaca-area living wage estimate calculated by a local credit union, some $17,500, and prorated it for their ten-month schedule of 32-hour weeks. That $14,600 figure is the basis of their contract proposal.

The Ithaca school board refuses to even acknowledge the living wage issue.

"I don't think we have the right to tax for social goals such as the living wage," one board member has told the press. "We should be paying market rates [for personnel]. If we pay more than we have to for labor, we have to tax for it. Then we are taxing poor people to help other poor people."

In translation, the Ithaca district "has no clue what we paraeducators do and just doesn't think we're worth it," says Minnick.

But IPA officers—Minnick, Michele Gordon, Carol Barriere, and Joanne Denison—aren't going to wait for board members to tour their schools and learn the complexity of para work. These local leaders have teamed up with their 14 building reps to involve members in a citywide campaign for para recognition and fair pay.

A Para-Public Bond

Backed by the communications expertise of NEA-New York and the organizing skills of two invaluable local allies—the Midstate Central Labor

Coalition, AFL-CIO, and the Tompkins County Living Wage Coalition—Ithaca paras are appealing to the conscience of this education-minded community.

Paras are stating their case at public events such as forums and school board rallies, joined by teachers and other ESP, union and community activists, and even Cornell University students.

And paras are learning about supporters they never knew they had.

"So far, we've collected close to 3,000 signatures on a petition to the school board for a living wage," reports Carl Feuer, a staffer for the Midstate Central Labor Coalition.

"We have a strong sense we're bargaining for *every* ESP."
—UniServ rep Dan Cuomo

"If you mention 'paraprofessionals' or 'living wage' to community residents, they *grab* the petition," Feuer adds. "There's widespread public opposition to paying less than a living wage, and we find a tremendous amount of love and respect for what paraprofessionals do in the schools."

This para-public bond will be further strengthened by a recently released video on IPA members' commitment and poverty pay, *The Hands That Help.*

Produced by the Tompkins County Living Wage Coalition with funding from the National Organization for Women, the video notes that Ithaca paras are over 90 percent female and 20 percent people of color and live right on the economic margins.

Paras like Debi Petersen Moore, Rae Williams, and Lambertis Gibbs take viewers through their tough jobs and tight finances—an act of courage.

"I feel so strongly about this. People need to know it," Moore declares.

"I've put my heart in this job for ten years, shown the commitment," she stresses. "Yet I have to borrow nonstop from my parents and brother to survive and can't pay all of my bills. I've had the gas and electric turned off twice in a year. *It's not fair.*"

A Moral Imperative

"Our members fully support what we're trying to do in this living wage campaign," says Minnick.

So you can believe Moore when she says: "We're prepared to do *whatever* it takes. And if it takes a year, it takes a year."

"This is the best, most engaging contract campaign I've ever worked on," says NEA-New York UniServ rep Dan Cuomo. "It combines positive people with a moral imperative.

"We have a strong sense that we're bargaining for every other ESP group in the state," he adds. "Other superintendents are definitely watching." ✔

For more information, contact Debbie Minnick at Debbieipa@aol.com.

Only Heroes

Among the 6,000 victims of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center were 1,000 union members—including firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians who died in the act of rescuing others.

Topping the list in both numbers and sheer bravery were some 340 members of the International Association of Fire Fighters, AFL-CIO. Many of them, and their supervising officers, perished in smoke-filled stairwells while evacuating people from the flaming Twin Towers.

"We know that our brothers and our sisters were responding as they were trained to do," points out IAFF President Harold A. Schaitberger. "They were performing search and rescue, evacuating people in chaos, and staging and initiating attacks on fires."

These public servants had no desire to be heroes, Schaitberger says. They simply understood that firefighters have "a higher calling."

There's "no decision" necessary when you see someone in a burning building, adds a New York firefighter who survived. "You already made that decision when you took the job. What we do has value—we know that."

Other public employees who didn't think twice about saving lives—and paid with their own—were 23 members of the New York Patrolmen's Benevolent Association and ten emergency medical technicians represented by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO.

Another fallen AFSCME member is especially missed by firefighters. The Rev. Mychal Judge, a member of Local 299 and chaplain of the New York City Fire Department, died at the scene ministering to an injured firefighter.

In the aftermath of September 11, hundreds of union firefighters, ironworkers, and steelworkers have been at the World Trade Center site helping with rescue and recovery efforts.

But there's *other* follow-up work to be done.

"The terrorist attack on the USA is an attack against all the ideals treasured by democratic societies, which are basic values promoted by teachers," wrote Norwegian Union of Teachers leaders Helga Hjetland and Haldis Holst to NEA President Bob Chase. NUT and NEA are both part of Education International, a world federation of educator unions led by former NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell.

"Education unions have a special role to play in promoting and protecting democratic values. The fight against religious and political extremism starts in the classroom," wrote Hjetland and Holst.

Here's a chance for all educators to be heroes.

And here's yet another chance: Contribute generously to the NEAFT September 11 Fund, established by NEA and the American Federation of Teachers. This fund provides long-range assistance to the children and affected families of victims of terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. Checks made out to the NEAFT September 11 Fund can be sent to NEA (attn: Dennis Van Roekel), 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

AP/Alan Diaz

Firefighters on way to the World Trade Center.

Just 12 days after the September 11 disaster, 13 union coal miners died in explosions at the Jim Walter Resources Mine No. 5 in Brookwood, Alabama. Twelve of those men perished while trying to rescue a co-worker.

"People rushing instinctively toward the danger instead of away from it—we've all heard the stories of miners who escaped the first blast running back into the mine to help those first trapped," U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao said at the miners' memorial service.

"Whether they were firefighters from Brooklyn, New York or miners from Brookwood, Alabama," Chao said, "America's heroes are mostly ordinary people who do extraordinary things with extraordinary courage."

In Wyoming last June, the Natrona County school board voided its 32-year agreement with the Natrona County Education Association/NEA and unilaterally imposed a contract of its own.

But NCEA never, ever, flinched.

Local President Alice McNamee coolly informed the board: *"The Association's position continues to be that this good faith agreement is presently in effect and will continue to be in effect until such time as the terms and conditions for change of the contract are met."*

"NCEA members were absolutely dedicated to finding a solution to this dilemma," reports UniServ Director Harold Bovee. "They did lots of hard-nosed volunteer work to open up communications with both the board and the public."

These teachers joined with students and parents to collect more than 4,500 signatures on a petition calling on the board to reinstate the contract and enter into negotiations with NCEA.

The upshot: In September, representatives from the entire Natrona County school community—teachers, ESP, school board members, administrators, and a parent—gathered for an NEA-coordinated weekend retreat on "interest-based strategies" for bargaining. Stay tuned.

It's Time Washington *Listened* to Us

There are five good reasons to invest in federal political action.

Photos by Robert Chase

Teachers Joyce White Lalonde, left, and Maria Peters know that political action at the federal level impacts everything from special education to school nutrition. That's why they and many other Michigan NEA members donate each year to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

Maria Peters, a special education teacher consultant in Michigan's Utica Community School District, sees challenges that can tax even the most affluent district.

Many educators work with a growing number of autistic students, while special ed teachers plow through endless paperwork and meetings.

Special ed caseloads "are never where they should be," says Peters, and regular ed teachers have a crying need for training on working with special needs kids. "Even one full day would help them," she says.

This is just *one* emerging need that the state of Michigan and its school districts must struggle to pay for, and it competes strongly with other priorities like school repair.

"We need more funding for new teacher support," stresses Michigan NEA member Jennifer Migrin, a brand-new eighth grade science teacher at Emerson Middle School in Livonia. "We need money for classroom supplies, and sufficient staffing and training to teach special needs kids.

"New teachers are often scared to ask questions," Migrin says. "Our district is doing an all-right job at mentoring, but federal assistance could make it more extensive.

"We need to fund mentor training, and to be able to pair a new teacher with a mentor in a similar field," says Migrin. "Most of all, we need mentors who are *always* available to us."

Like many Michigan educators, Peters and Migrin share an unwillingness to settle for less, and think Washington should pay its fair share of educating America's kids.

That's one of the reasons Michigan Education Association members choose to donate heavily to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, which pools the voluntary contributions from many of NEA's 2.6 million members to elect friends of public education to federal office.

> **"We educators have political power that we often never use. In fact, power is used against us because we've been too nice."**
>
> —Michigan teacher Joyce White Lalonde

"We don't do phone calling and we discourage mailbox stuffing," says Al Short, director of MEA Government Affairs. "We raise political action funds through personal, member-to member contact, work station by work station."

That direct approach works well for Maria Peters and other leaders of the Utica Education Association. Once a year, the local's building reps fan out to buttonhole colleagues on why they should contribute to the MEA and NEA political action funds.

"My building has had 100 percent PAC re-enrollment for the past three years," reports UEA activist Joyce White Lalonde, a teacher at Rose Kidd Elementary in Sterling Heights and vice chair of the statewide MEA Political Action Committee.

"Each year at fundraising time," she notes, "I cook my colleagues breakfast, but don't give them silverware until they give me their signed PAC forms. You have to bring some humor to political fundraising!"

Public school employees' work environment depends on political action donations, Lalonde often tells colleagues, "yet we have political power that we often never use. In fact, power is used against us in Washington because we've been too nice."

Are you still too "nice" to invest a few bucks in federal political action?

THE BOTTOM LINE

SCHOOL GRADES: A new Gallup poll reports that Americans' approval of public schools is at a 30-year high. More than 50 percent polled give their local schools a grade of *A* or *B*. www.gallup.com/Poll/releases/pr010823.asp.

DISCIPLINE: Teachers using humorous alternatives to detention, such as one who requires disruptive students to listen to her play the accordion, report fewer infractions and better bonds with kids. www.ascd.org/readingroom/edupdate/2001/frame0108eu.html.

OVERCROWDING: As school enrollment trends continue to grow, facilities are far exceeding their capacities. In 1999, 10 percent of public schools were over capacity by more than 25 percent. http:/nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=94.

DIVERSITY: A cultural research group suggests five standards for effective teaching—all based on the idea of mining sociocultural diversity for valuable learning tools. www.crede.ucsc.edu/Standards/standards.html.

Then these five political facts of life may be eye-openers:

1. Congress passes laws that directly affect you and your students. Congress is now working to reauthorize the far-reaching Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). On the table in this process is every issue from Title I funding and "tenure reform" to new teacher "quality" standards and annual reading and math testing for *all* students in grades 3-8.

And within the ESEA debate, lawmakers are deliberating a provision requiring the federal government to fulfill its commitment to pay up to 40 percent of the annual cost of implementing the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), now funded at only 15 percent.

In fact, no matter what your job title, federal legislation affects you directly, be it through existing professional development, Pell Grant funding, or current bills to create new standards for Title I paraprofessionals or abolish the Social Security Offset.

2. Your dues dollars are not used to make contributions to political parties or candidates. Federal campaign law prohibits any union from using general treasury funds to "make contributions or expenditures in connection with federal campaigns."

The law does, however, allow the existence of a separate political action committee, or PAC, funded with voluntary member donations.

Expenditures from the separate NEA Fund for Children and Public Education are made in several ways—including direct contributions to candidates, assistance to state and national committees of both political parties, and "independent expenditures" to communicate on issues to the public.

3. The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education helps recommended candidates be heard. "The reality of modern politics," points out NEA Government Relations staffer Mary Alice Heretick, "is that candidates in both political parties who are good on issues of children and public education need resources to get their message out."

4. In an era of close elections and slim legislative majorities, every dollar counts. In the November 2000 elections, support from The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education helped put recommended candidates over the top in several tight races. Now, it'll take stepped-up spending in the 2002 elections to create solid, pro-education majorities in the U.S. House and Senate.

"Several of NEA's legislative priorities—including enhancement of programs to reduce class size and pay for emergency repairs in struggling schools—were defeated by just one or two votes in the Senate," notes NEA staffer Heretick. "We have to elect more allies."

5. Educators need a real voice in Washington, D.C. Too many education decisions are made by federal officials who don't know the challenges faced by schools, like the influx of special needs kids.

"Educators get no input in decisions that affect us—only blame, ridicule, and slander," thunders Joyce White Lalonde. "We can change all that by electing more people who *listen* to us." ✔

For more on reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, go to www.nea.org/lac/esea. To help elect friends of public education, send a check made out to The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education to NEA Government Relations, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Do'ers Profile

JENNIFER MIGRIN

■ ***Name and profession:*** Jennifer Migrin, first-year eighth grade science teacher at Emerson Middle School, Livonia, Michigan

■ ***NEA local affiliate:*** Livonia Education Association

■ ***Position:*** Member of the Michigan Education Association's New Member Task Force

■ ***Getting more resources to newcomers:*** Among other things, our task force is working to better integrate new members into MEA professional development conferences and improve the Association's new member handbook.

We've also developed new monthly packets—for teachers, ESP, and higher ed members—that are user friendly and contain only what's relevant for the month.

■ ***Making schools more welcoming:*** One of our main concerns is improving school orientation programs. A lot of new educators feel completely isolated.

We can cross this boundary by creating a more comfortable, "family" environment for newly hired people.

■ ***What veterans can do:*** Work as a team with new members to achieve what's best for kids—and remember that what's routine for you is brand new to us. Just think back to what it was like when you were a new educator!

■ ***What NEA local affiliates can do:*** Form a new member club. It's a good way for newcomers to socialize, network across school lines, and get involved in the Association.

And support the NEA Student Program—it's a neat way for prospective teachers to ease their way into the profession, to get a feel for what's going on.

(To contact Jennifer Migrin, send an E-mail to pravatoj@msu.edu.)

KUDOS TO. . .

. . . North Carolina Governor Mike Easley, who has signed a new law, strongly supported by the North Carolina Association of Educators, that contains basic hearing and appeal rights for education support professionals. The legislation guarantees their right to receive reasons in writing in the event they are dismissed, demoted, or suspended without pay. The final bill had the support of the North Carolina state associations of school boards and administrators.

. . . The California Teachers Association and the California State PTA, which have launched a joint public awareness campaign stressing that education begins at home with involved families. Its components: a community outreach program and a statewide advertising blitz featuring CTA President Barbara E. Kerr and actors Edward James Olmos and Debbie Allen.

. . . The Florida Education Association, which has unveiled a new billboard publicizing the state's underfunding of public education. The billboard reads, "Wanted: Teachers and support personnel for Florida public schools. Below average salary, overcrowded classrooms, benefits reduced annually. Apply to Governor Jeb Bush at (850) 488-4441."

. . . Members of the Education Association of Round Lake in Illinois. The school board has refused to ask voters for a tax hike to fund the cash-strapped district, and legislators have refused to send an emergency loan. So members have pursued another option: They've sent more than 200 letters to heads of state and embassies around the world requesting financial aid for their schools and 6,000 students.

"It's a long shot," concedes EARL President Kim Kearby, "but the alternative is surrender, and we will never give up."

RETENTION: A new report urges school districts to put equal effort into retaining teachers as into recruiting them—and offers innovative tips for turning new teachers into veterans. www.sreb.org/main/HigherEd/ReduceLosses.asp.

HOME-SCHOOLING: In 1999, 850,000 U.S. kids were home-schooled. The top reason, say 49 percent of the kid's parents, is to provide "better education." Thirty-eight percent cited "religious reasons." http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/HomeSchool/reasons.asp.

VALUES: Contrary to the frequent criticism that public schools no longer teach values, a new study finds that traditional and contemporary values permeate public schooling. www.ucr.edu/news/releases/schoolvalues.html.

DISTANCE LEARNING: More than 1.6 elementary and secondary school-aged children participate in federally supported distance learning programs—and they're valuable in big cities as well as rural areas. http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=79.

Breaking the Mold on Air Quality

NEA members in Connecticut and across the U.S. attack indoor air quality problems through the EPA's *Tools for Schools* program.

Photos by Jonathan Olsen

Through their indoor air quality team, Missy Wrigley and Diane Ethier have gotten carpeting—a breeding ground for mold—removed from their high school library.

Plainfield High School in rural northeastern Connecticut is an aging, leaky, stuffy, and stained structure, a sort of bricks-and-mortar monument to budget cuts and deferred maintenance.

In recent years, the school's structural ailments—including a leaky roof, soaked carpeting and ceiling tiles, and unbalanced ventilation system—have generated a series of human ailments, from burning eyes to asthma.

This building is so "sick" that it's slated for replacement by 2005. But its occupants aren't about to suffer alone and in silence until moving day.

Plainfield High staffers are pushing for a better indoor environment *now* by using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools" (TfS) kit—already adopted by some 9,000 schools nationwide.

By following this action kit's checklists, school staffers have a better handle on preventive maintenance.

They've mapped the building's indoor air quality trouble spots on a color-coded map, and they're attacking them through a broad-based indoor air quality (IAQ) action team that includes three Plainfield Education Association teacher members, the principal, the head custodian, the school nurse, three parents, and the head of the Northeast District Department of Health.

A complete cure for the building's ills "is too late at this point, but we're trying to stop the bleeding," says math teacher Diane Ethier, who co-chairs the team with special ed teacher Missy Wrigley.

By the start of this school year, an industrial hygienist had examined the building and offered a list of 19 recommended improvements, to which the air quality team added priorities of its own, including purchase of high-suction vacuum cleaners.

"Here and there, we're winning little victories," reports Ethier. "The high school's roof has been repaired. Some porous building material—a breeding ground for mold—has been removed, and carpeting has been pulled from the library and hallways."

Moreover, unit ventilators are now better maintained, and some have gotten bigger motors. And maintenance staffers now avoid unwise quick fixes, like spray-painting stained ceiling tiles.

And at long last, Plainfield staffers now know their mortal enemies by name: carbon dioxide and molds like aspergillus versicolor and penicillium.

"If we'd had Tools for Schools in place for the past ten years, none of this would have happened," sighs Ethier. "This program helps you stop indoor air quality problems in the first place."

ADVICE FROM THE TRENCHES:

"If indoor air is making teachers sick, students are probably getting sick, too. Don't sit there by yourself and suffer. Attack building problems while they're small, before they get out of hand.

"Get yourself tested by an allergist. Let parents and townspeople know what's going on. And, if need be, don't be afraid to go to the press or file a workers' compensation claim."

—Connecticut math teacher Diane Ethier

Asthma on Rise in Connecticut

"*Tools for Schools* provides preventive measures for schools to prioritize and address indoor air quality issues," stresses Connecticut Education Association Vice President Phil Apruzzese, who has helped train educators like Diane Ethier how to apply the TfS program in their schools. "Better yet, it's a low-cost, no-cost kind of thing."

CEA has thrown its full weight behind this voluntary federal program—and for some very compelling reasons. While renowned for its tough teacher standards and high student achievement, Connecticut has no legally enforceable indoor air quality standards for its schools.

The result: educational statistics the Constitution State *doesn't* boast about.

CEA estimates that one in 12 of the state's students lives with some degree of asthma, while environmental health experts at the University of Connecticut report that teachers have the state's highest rate of occupational asthma, with machinists having the second-highest rate.

In response to this crisis, CEA and two other statewide organizations formed the Connecticut School Indoor Environment Resource Team in 1999.

That team, which has since expanded to 14 coalition partners, has trained staff committees in 48 schools on how to apply the Tools for Schools program, and is training another 28 this fall.

"We're truly a team. No one organization is 'larger' than another," says Apruzzese, one of the coalition's six

trainers. He conducts workshops alongside indoor air quality specialists from the state Department of Public Health, UConn, Yale, the Connecticut Council for Occupational Safety and Health, and the American Lung Association's Open Airways program.

This five-hour program, which trains Tools for Schools committees on everything from ventilation basics to "walk-through" school inspections, "stresses communications with staff, parents, and school boards, and prioritization of goals and immediate needs," Apruzzese notes. "Our coalition's next objective is to train grassroots TfS trainers and provide ongoing consultation to TfS committees."

And count on coalition partners to lobby hard this coming February for a strong indoor environmental quality bill for Connecticut's schools.

This legislation, which passed the state Senate in the last session but never came to a House vote, contains such groundbreaking provisions as state clean-up and construction grants for schools with documented indoor air quality problems, a fixed schedule of school health and HVAC inspections, asthma exams and tracking for students, and site assessments for new building construction.

Key to Clean-Up: Organization

With or without strong indoor environmental legislation, the key to school clean-up in your state will always be school-site organization.

"You need to pull together an IAQ team that's as diverse as possible, with members from inside and outside the school," emphasizes Michele Hodak of the NEA Health Information Network.

"You need different perspectives and levels of expertise—from facilities personnel to local health officials," Hodak adds. "Even students can be advocates for air quality! All of these stakeholders *together* can be a strong force for getting things done."

"By working as a team, everyone begins to appreciate how their actions affect the indoor environment," says Susan Womble, director of EPA's Center for Pollutants and Source Guidance. "Teachers learn that their classrooms' unit ventilators shouldn't be used as bookshelves, that they shouldn't block the door vents or shut off air cleaner fans to muffle noise, or spray pests with their own can of Raid. This all greatly impacts air quality." ✔

To request the EPA's Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools action kit, go to www.neahin.org/7.html or call 800/718-8387.

For more on the IAQ Tools for Schools program, current research on the impact of indoor air quality on student performance and asthma, and mold remediation guidance, go to www.epa.gov/iaq.

And to order IAQ publications, call EPA's Indoor Air Quality Information Hotline at 800/438-4318.

Mold Contamination Ends Teaching Career

Staffers at the McKinley School in Fairfield, Connecticut used to joke about "teaching a rain forest unit" each time they saw painters scrape mold off the walls of their aging, water-saturated school.

But the joke ended when special education teacher Joellen Lawson removed mold-contaminated materials from her classroom in June 1998.

Lawson's overexposure to mycotoxins—produced by millions of stachybotrus, penicillium, and aspergillus mold spores in the air—sent her to the emergency room with severe vertigo, vomiting, diarrhea, and tremors.

Mold contamination at McKinley was so bad, in fact, that parents pulled sick kids from the school, forcing its permanent shutdown in October 2000.

Dr. John Santilli, chief of allergy and immunology at St. Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport, has seen allergies, "horrendous" sinus disease, asthma, or cognitive problems among some 50 students and staffers he has treated from the McKinley School.

"Some McKinley students have developed asthma for the very first time," the physician reports, "and there have been anecdotal stories of miscarriages and cancer."

One of Santilli's most serious cases is that of Joellen Lawson. Her body simply couldn't handle such intense exposure to mycotoxins, and she never regained her health.

Today on disability retirement, Lawson continues to suffer from well-documented neurological, respiratory, gastrointestinal, and sensory disturbances.

"I'm devastated," she says, "by the loss of a very fulfilling, 23-year career as a classroom teacher, educational consultant, seminar leader, and private tutor."

This dedicated educator hopes to be well enough to testify in favor of strong school environmental quality legislation that will be reintroduced in the Connecticut legislature next February. "I want to prevent someone else from going through my experience," she explains.

And count on Dr. Santilli to testify as well. "Nobody was ever exposed to these levels of mycotoxins until schools deteriorated," he points out. "Now I'm seeing cognitive problems in kids from other schools besides McKinley, along with eczema and anaphylactic problems.

"We need to do more research on mycotoxins," the physician concludes, "and the Environmental Protection Agency needs to develop standards on how to evaluate mold and contaminants in schools and other public buildings." ✔

Connecticut special education teacher Joellen Lawson: "I'm devastated by the loss of a very fulfilling 23-year career."

To read a consultant's technical report on conditions in the McKinley School, go to www.fairfield.k12.ct.us/TurnerReport.pdf.

Federal Cash Needed To Repair Schools

It takes lots of money to reverse the building deterioration affecting indoor air quality in schools. That's why two concerned members of the U.S. House of Representatives, Republican Nancy Johnson of Connecticut and Democrat Charles Rangel of New York, have introduced H.R. 1076, the America's Better Classrooms Act.

The bill would make $25 billion in interest-free bonds available to modernize outdated school buildings, repair safety problems, build new schools, and connect classrooms to updated technology.

Yet despite bipartisan support, H.R. 1076 is going nowhere. A chief obstacle: House Speaker Dennis Hastert, who largely determines which bills are scheduled for a vote.

It's time for a wake-up call. Recently, poor conditions forced the evacuation of two school buildings in Hastert's own Illinois district—one for severe mold contamination.

Illinois schools aren't alone. According to the American Institute of Architects, one in every three public schools is in dire need of repair.

"At an average age of 43 years, public schools will continue to crumble without federal help," says NEA President Bob Chase. "Unsafe and uncomfortable conditions impair learning and student achievement." ✔

For more on the America's Better Classrooms Act, go to www.nea.org/lac/modern/.

Do students behave better when the teacher is well dressed?

LINDA FISHER-GRIGGS ***is in her second year as computer reading lab facilitator at Alamo Elementary School, Galveston, Texas. Before that, she taught kindergarten for 16 years. She is treasurer of the Galveston Education Association.***

yes

First impressions can be lasting impressions!

When the staff is well groomed, that sets the tone for harmony in learning. It demonstrates how important the learning environment and the students are to the staff.

Your dress will inspire the desire to learn. We are the role models. Self-respect, honor, dignity, love, and high expectations are all character-building characteristics that a productive learner needs to witness in staff members. We are the foundation builders. Which would you prefer, a foundation built of sand, or of concrete?

Students spend more time in our presence than anywhere else. When they arrive at school, students should sense and see both our inward confidence and our outward appearance making a bold statement.

We should be, as the saying goes, "a sight for sore eyes." Being well dressed can project a sense of healing, comfort, and peace.

When the teaching staff are not respectfully dressed, that motivates disruption in the classroom. It sends the message that learning is not a priority here. Anything goes.

It shows a lack of preparation and organizational skills.

It says respect is not important, nor are the students. It shows lack of consideration for others.

We are the guides while they explore life and its challenges. Our students are precious jewels placed in our care. What will you do with the treasure entrusted to you? We have the responsibility to handle each with care. This includes your appearance. Remember, "Handle with care!"

On our campus, this issue is raised every year. During our opening in-service meeting, dressing for success and setting the standard as role models are discussed.

We have "The Wardrobe Witch," a horrible-looking creature created by my principal, drawn on paper. A witch can be placed in a staff member's school mailbox if someone feels things are out of order.

Staff members can do this, not only the principal, and the principal is not exempt from receiving a "Witch."

A written reminder is always placed in our boxes before the "Witch" starts flying.

No one has ever told if they received one, but I know a few I'd like to issue one to.

I once witnessed a new teacher who was having problems with behavior and whose appearance was not up to par.

The funny thing is, this person had a mentor whose appearance was the same way.

Some days, I wondered if they were competing to be the worst dressed staff member—and to have the most behavior problems with students.

I don't think they had a clue it could change if they changed their attire.

We are to set the example! ✔

FODIE MITCHELL ***is a special education teacher at Red Springs High School in Red Springs, North Carolina. She has worked in education for 27 years as a teacher and educational diagnostician. She is president of the Robeson Association of Educators.***

no

I work at a school that used to have dress-down Fridays for faculty and staff. We could wear jeans and sneakers. This year, the principal declared no more dress-down Fridays.

The students do not behave any differently, better or worse.

So I doubt that the teacher's attire has a profound negative effect on student behavior.

It has been said that the principal sets the tone in the school. My principal dresses professionally every day. His teachers do, too. Why are we still having discipline problems? Students seemingly do not care about any authority figure's attire.

Some students are discipline problems in classrooms where men wear neckties and women wear dresses. Why? I do not think a student decides to "act out" in class because a male teacher did not wear a tie that day.

Likewise, a child doesn't decide to behave just because I wear a long skirt, with pantyhose and heels. Students decide to behave or misbehave based on other reasons. Bigger and more serious issues are at hand than my hair style or attire.

I take pride in my dress. It carries the message, "I am the adult, and you are the student." My colleagues compliment me often. However, I have discipline problems once in a while.

Of course teachers should wear appropriate clothes. We are role models for our students, even if they do not acknowledge us as such.

Professional teachers have been told that they should simultaneously dress their role and be comfortable. A physical education teacher would look silly in a suit and tie while teaching students the fundamentals of volleyball. Likewise, a math teacher would appear out of place teaching theorems while dressed in a t-shirt and shorts.

But we should not be placing the awesome responsibility for student behavior solely on schools and teachers.

I believe students enter our schools, particularly high schools, with established behavior patterns. Yes, behavior is learned and can be unlearned. But students come in with behavior patterns that have little to do with teachers' clothes.

Students yearn for discipline, stability, boundaries, and consistency—at home as well as at school. Parents need to be held more accountable for allowing their children to wear clothing that suggests or promotes negative and unacceptable behavior.

I believe students would behave better if *they* were well dressed. We need to consider school uniforms. And if we have them for students, then staff members should wear uniforms as well.

But teachers are working hard under some extreme conditions. We have been scrutinized, labeled, and disrespected for too long.

Student behavior, and misbehavior, begins at home. It is only fair to look homeward, not at our attire, for the solutions to our students' behavioral problems. ✔

What's Your Opinion?

Do students behave better when the teacher is well dressed?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Should staff in tougher schools get higher pay?
The tally on this Debate question from the last issue of *NEA Today*:
54% Yes **46% No**

INTERVIEW

Special Needs Friends

Maria Shriver knows that real inclusion means real understanding.

Today's inclusive classrooms call for heightened awareness and sensitivity on the part of both educators and students. Educators know they must meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and create an inclusive environment. But the nondisabled students play a critical role in creating a classroom where everyone feels accepted—where everyone's friends. A new children's book by journalist Maria Shriver promotes understanding and encourages friendships between nondisabled students and those with special needs. What's Wrong with Timmy? *tells the story of Kate and her budding friendship with Timmy, a young boy who is developmentally disabled. Shriver spoke recently with the NEA Professional Library's Sabrina Holcomb, co-author of* The New IDEA Survival Guide.

Diana Roday Hosford

Journalist Maria Shriver's new book promotes friendships between nondisabled kids and kids with special needs.

Why did you create this book?
I'm on the board of the Special Olympics, and often people with nondisabled kids would say to me, "I'd like my children to volunteer with the Special Olympics or attend as spectators. But I don't know how to explain to them what cerebral palsy is or mental retardation. How can I help them be sensitive to people with disabilities?"

I had already written a children's book called *What's Heaven?* to help children deal with death and grief, and I was very committed to having a series of books to help children and their parents begin discussions about sensitive subjects. I hope *What's Wrong with Timmy?* will promote a constructive dialogue between kids and their parents.

How has your involvement with the Special Olympics deepened your understanding of the challenges that children with special needs face?
I've seen how the families of disabled children have struggled for respect and understanding for their kids. I hear parents talk about their children not being included in basic activities that many of our children take for granted—birthday parties, soccer games, or just hanging out together. This exclusion causes such pain. These kids' main desire is to be included, and they almost never are.

That's why I wrote this book primarily for nondisabled kids and their families. To help them understand the difference they could make in another child's life. When kids see a child who's "different," they can be like Kate when she reaches out to Timmy. They have the power to reach out and invite a child to be a part of their group.

How can educators and parents use this book with kids?
Ideally, educators could assign the book for reading and then lead an open discussion or have kids write about their reactions to the book and their own experiences. There's a teacher's guide that offers tips on presenting the story, discussion questions, and follow-up activities on related topics, such as appreciating differences and creating a classroom environment in which all students feel accepted.

I'd like to see parents read the book with their kids, then talk openly and honestly with their children about their own experiences. Kids often feel alone with their feelings of isolation, fear, or confusion. Once children know that their parents have experienced similar misgivings or apprehension, they won't feel as if there's something wrong with them when they're not sure how to behave in certain situations.

***What's Wrong with Timmy?* captures the thoughts and language of a child. But what would you say to people who might have a problem with the book's title?**
Usually the first words out of every kid's mouth when they see another child who looks, acts, or talks differently are: "What's wrong with that kid?" In order to get through to children, I had to make sure they see themselves in the book. Kids are much more likely to pick up a book that has a title they can identify with. Of course, once they read the book, they see that there's nothing *wrong* with Timmy.

Nondisabled children are often left out of the discussion about inclusion. Kids have so many questions. I want them to know that whatever being different is, it's not something they need to fear.

Courage seems to be one of the book's strongest themes, perhaps even more than acceptance and tolerance. Timmy's mother tells him to be strong inside when the other kids make fun of him. Kate tells herself to be strong when she worries whether her friends will accept Timmy. Would you say that these kids' courage leads to acceptance and tolerance?
Exactly. It takes courage to confront your own fears and move through them. Sometimes it takes courage to reach out to someone who's different. It takes courage when children get to middle school to resist drugs and alcohol.

But the most important lesson in the book is that we all have common ground and we all want the same things—to be included, respected, and validated.

What's Wrong with Timmy? asks kids to look beyond everybody's differences—physical, mental, ethnic, or religious—and see that every child has something special to contribute. That's a lesson you're never too young to learn.

FOR MORE

■ Maria Shriver's ***What's Wrong with Timmy?*** has been paired with ***The New IDEA Survival Guide*** in a special package from the NEA Professional Library. $17.95 for NEA members, Item# 2016-2-10-D. To order, call 800/229-4200, or visit the Web at www.nea.org/books.

Coming this winter from the NEA Professional Library—***The IDEA Classroom Tool Kit***. It gives busy educators the information and materials they need to teach a classroom filled with students who have various skill levels and special needs. You'll get useful strategies and checklists, as well as sample worksheets, IEP forms, progress reports, lesson plans, and other resources you can copy and adapt for your own use.

Collins

A Poem a Day

The nation's Poet Laureate has a new strategy for hooking students on poetry.

"It takes only one poem to make an addict," says **Billy Collins**, the nation's Poet Laureate for 2001-02. With that approach in mind, Collins is designing POETRY 180, a poem-a-day project for American high school students.

"The number also suggests a turn, maybe a turn back to poetry," says Collins. "High school is where poetry limps off to die, where our natural childhood instinct for poetry gets beaten out by the pressures of adolescence. Adolescence is based upon the value of acceleration, and poetry calls for us to slow down. That's why it's hard to capture high school students with the net of poetry."

Collins is selecting all the poems, which will be available on the Library of Congress Web site later this year, along with suggestions on how to implement the program.

The key element of POETRY 180 is to get the poem read aloud as part of the daily public announcements. But schools can tailor the program to fit their school day and can pick up on the project at any time.

Poems can be posted on bulletin boards for further perusal, or weekly packets can be created.

But Collins, who teaches English at the City University of New York, feels it's important that these poems not be taught. "I don't want the poem analyzed or placed on a test," insists Collins. "I want a distinction made between poetry as a subject in English class and poetry as a feature of daily life.

"If students get into the habit of hearing a poem, perhaps they will see that poetry is alive, contemporary," says Collins. He believes that if students are exposed to a hundred or more poems a year, this will increase the odds that they'll hear something they think is "cool." Students who thought they hated poetry may re-evaluate their attitudes.

Collins says the project has gotten great feedback from high school English teachers.

"I just think the students need to hear the right poems," he says. "The poems I select will be accessible, short, age-appropriate. I want poems that can be received on the first hearing. I want a smorgasbord of 180 good, clear interesting poems. Almost all will be contemporary not the old standbys.

Ben Baker

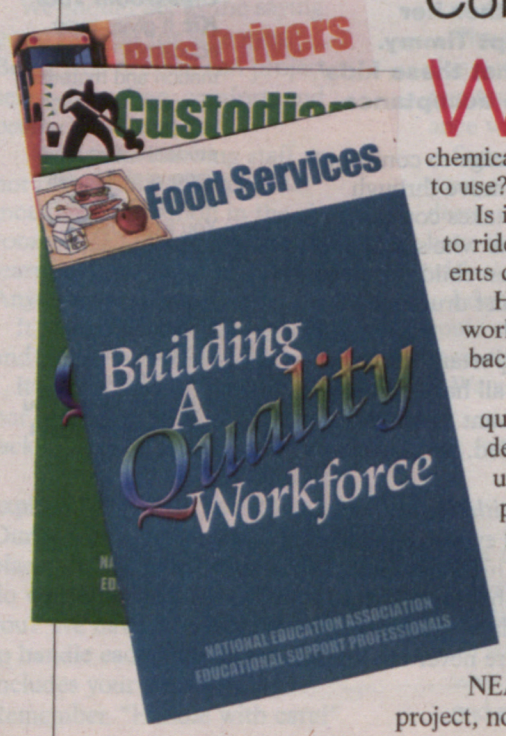
"I am going for smart, fresh young voices, mostly American," Collins adds. "I am not trying to assemble an anthology of important poets. I want poems you can listen to in a minute and which will take you on a little ride."

When Collins was in high school, he developed a love of verse through reading *Poetry* magazine, which his father brought home from his Wall Street office. "I'm not sure why the magazine came there," he says, "but no one read it. So he brought it to me.

"I heard these great voices that sounded like they were talking. I started to listen and I have not stopped listening."

For More: www.loc.gov/poetry/laureate.html.

Compact Guides to the Profession for ESP



Where can a custodian get reliable information about the hazardous chemicals he or she may be asked to use?

Is it safer for school children to ride a bus, or have their parents drive them to school?

How can food service workers find information on back injuries?

The answers to these questions, along with a great deal of other information useful for education support professionals, can be found in the new *Building a Quality Workforce* series of booklets from the NEA.

Agnes Smith, the NEA staffer heading this project, notes that NEA members themselves served as the main source of information.

"We brought together members from each job category and asked them to tell us about their work," Smith notes. "We used that information to make these booklets."

Each booklet describes in detail what people in the job category do, what their problems are, and how they deal with them.

Readers can find ideas and models for fighting against privatization, and for creating professional development opportunities. Also included are extensive lists of Web sites and other sources for further help.

The booklets can be used to educate other people in the school system about the full range of duties and responsibilities of education support professionals.

They're also useful in bargaining, public relations, and finding ways to solve individual work problems.

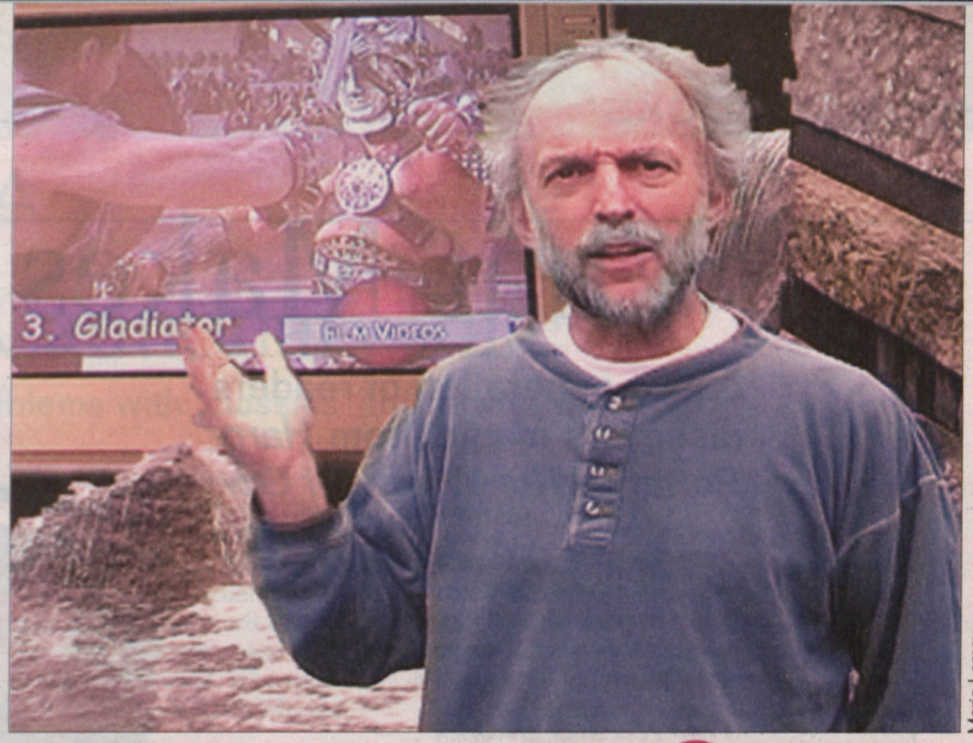
So far, the NEA has published booklets for food services staff, bus drivers, custodians, and a similar booklet for paraeducators called *The NEA Paraeducator Handbook*.

Four more publications—for clerical and secretarial ESP, health services, higher education support professionals, and skilled trades—will be ready by next spring.

And booklets for the other ESP job categories are scheduled for publication within 18 months.

For More: The booklets are available on the Web at www.nea.org/esp. Printed copies can be obtained through Uniserv staff.

Canadian Kids Vote On the Worst Media



Mario Lemay

Brodeur

What's the most toxic music video: Eminem, Marilyn Manson, Limp Bizkit, or Ricky Martin? And what's the worst television show?

Students all across Canada will send in their choices in an extraordinary election called "Youth Vote 2001," a joint project of two Canadian educators' unions.

The project isn't all about negatives—the students will also pick the best in each media category.

French Canada has done this for 10 years, and now the entire country is involved, through the efforts of the Canadian Federation of Teachers (CFT) and the Centrale des Sydicats du Quebec (CSQ).

The unions have been separated since 1970, but five years ago, they founded the Coalition for Responsible Television.

"Working for a common cause is always welcome," says **Jacques Brodeur**, a media consultant and former physical education teacher who developed this project.

Teachers receive an activity kit with ballots and a video explaining three toxic ingredients: sexism, racism, and violence.

A student narrator presents four toxic nominees within six categories: children's television, teen television, movies, music videos, video games, and television commercials.

After discussion, the students vote.

The same activity is repeated with examples of positive video media showing messages of cooperation, nonviolent problem solving, intercultural understanding, environmental protection, equality of men and women. Students view a total of 48 clips; 24 negative and 24 positive.

Brodeur says that when teachers try to discuss media violence with their students—the media consumers—they often hit a wall, because students view the teacher as old fashioned. But Youth Vote 2001 can get through.

"Our pedagogical approach is not that teachers know what's good for the students," he says. "It's that we are looking together with the students at some familiar messages to see if some of them have damaging influences."

The results will be announced November 20.

For More: Contact Isabelle Gareau (CSQ) at 514/356-8888, ext. 2139, or Francine Filion (CFT) at 613/232-1505, ext. 130. Or visit the Web at www.ctf-fce.ca/.

Aurthur D. Lauck

Stewart

Using Marriage to Teach Economics

NEA member **Velma Stewart** *has an unusual strategy for teaching her tenth grade civics and free enterprise students how to manage money. She "marries" them. Stewart teaches at White Castle High School in rural Louisiana.*

What are these 'marriages'?

The students tell me whom they would like to marry, but I don't always give them the person they picked. Some stay single, because that's how it is in the real world.

They budget $1,500 a month for their house note, car loan, insurance, clothes, groceries, two kids in daycare, furniture, savings, and other bills.

How does it work out in practice?

Often they'll ask for more money, or devise clever excuses to avoid budgeting certain items, like saying their mom watches their kids so they don't need daycare.

Some students try to get a divorce, but they have to give me good grounds. I want to make the process as realistic as possible. They learn they can't have everything.

And they realize the value of partnerships. If a student doesn't turn in his homework, I'll come down on the spouse, too.

Do students like this assignment?

They love it. They are making lifelike decisions that revolve around what we are learning in our textbooks—supply and demand, economy, family relationships.

For More: E-mail Stewart at stew122744@aol.com.

'How is this possible?'

Junior high and high school students from New York journeyed south to the Mexican border this year to learn about conditions in the factories set up by American companies after the North American Free Trade Agreement took effect in 1994.

The group was led by Maureen Casey of the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition, which sponsored the trip. Casey says she wanted the students to see first-hand that for these workers, free trade has meant working 48 hours a week to earn no more than $35, and living in squalor.

Now Casey has edited a book of photos and student writings about the trip.

"When I read the observations of the young people, I knew we needed to share their reactions with others," says Casey. "We also had an excellent photographer with us on the trip. Her images, combined with the kids' words, make for a magnificent teaching tool."

The book, *Border Witness: Youth Confront NAFTA*, is designed for grades seven to 12.

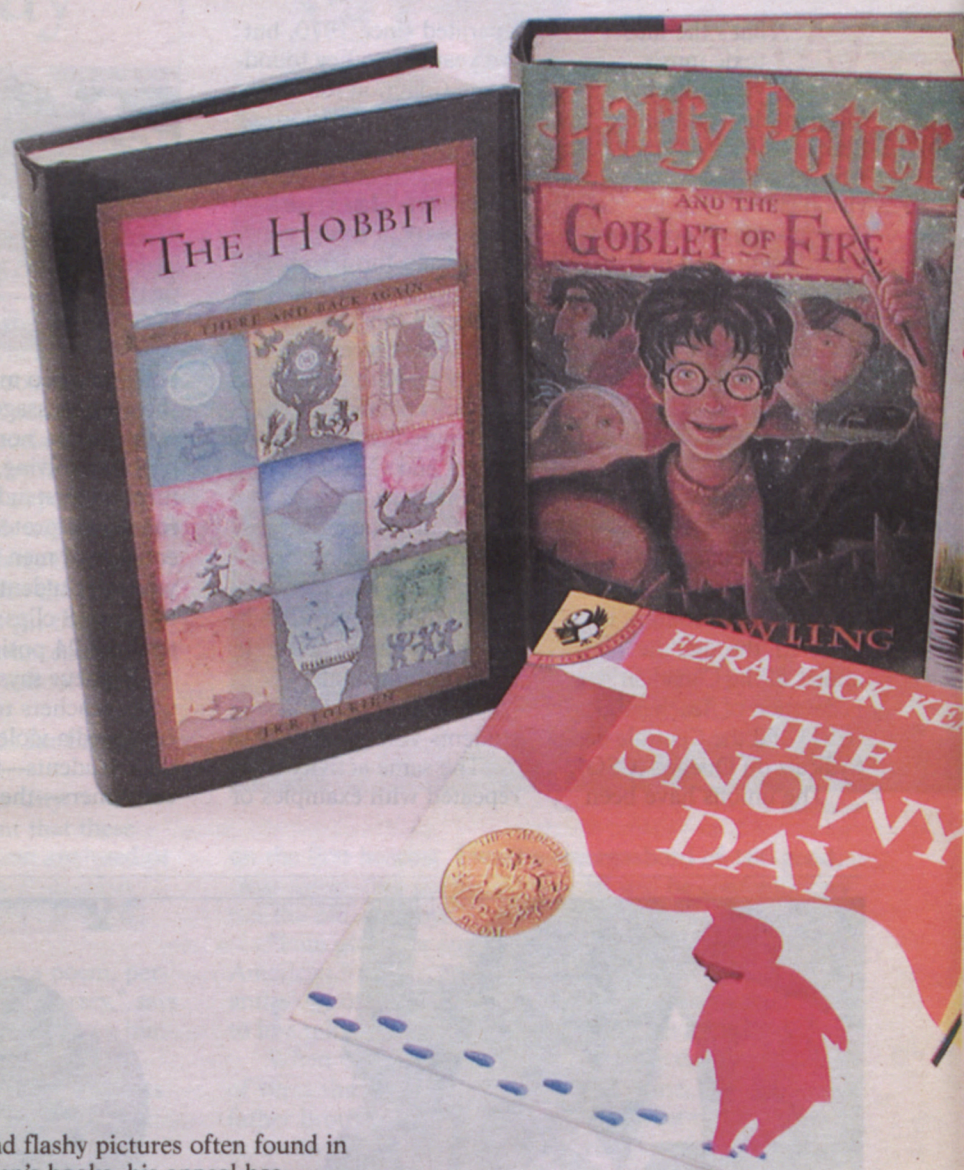
Sixteen-year-old Emily Wistar wrote the book's introduction: "The words 'free trade' take on a whole new meaning when seen through the eyes of a five-year-old Mexican girl, clad only in a too-big dress, no shoes to cover her feet. She stands on a pile of garbage just five feet from her 'home,' a small shack built from scrap metal, cardboard, and whatever other materials could be scavenged from the garbage dump that surrounds her. . . . How is this possible?"

"I've never been so moved in my life as I was by the kids' reactions," says Casey, "They rushed home to speak out at their churches and schools."

For More: Go to www.labor-religion.org/internationaltop.htm#book or phone 800-342-9810, ext. 6294. *Border Witness* costs $30 plus $3.50 s&h.

What Makes a Classic?

A new generation of readers discovers magic, from *Harry Potter* to *The Wizard of Oz*.



This fall, book-lovers are finding that a wave of classics have been re-released by publishers. Here's a list of some of the best, and what makes them classics.

The Wizard of Oz

by L. Frank Baum

It's the 100th anniversary for Dorothy, Toto, and their travel companions. Baum's tale has been revered by authors and illustrators alike for its imagery and imagination, and many publishers have issued versions with their interpretations. The official centennial edition has been released by HarperCollins, 267 pp. $24.95.

The Hobbit

by J.R.R. Tolkien

Before *The Lord of the Rings* was a movie blockbuster, there was, of course, Tolkien's trilogy. But before that trilogy came *The Hobbit*, where Tolkien set the stage with the adventures of the memorable Bilbo Baggins that continue to captivate readers. Houghton Mifflin, 320 pp., $14.40.

The Trumpet of the Swan

by E.B. White

This beloved masterpiece, featuring gentle Louis the trumpeter swan, tells a timeless story of friendship. That's probably why a new animated TV series is coming out based on the book. But the book is better. HarperCollins, 199 pp. $5.95.

Higglety, Pigglety, Pop

by Maurice Sendak

This was Sendak's first classic, and one of many Sendak creations that have fired children's imaginations with unique characters. Even though his style goes against the tide of bright colors and flashy pictures often found in children's books, his appeal has endured. Now Sendak himself has selected which of his titles to re-release, such as *In Grandpa's House* (done with his father), *The Happy Rain* (done with his brother), and *A Hole is to Dig* (done with writer Ruth Kraus). HarperCollins, $10 to $25.

Good Night Moon, My World, Two Little Trains

by Margaret Wise Brown

Margaret Wise Brown broke the mold of children's books by creating more challenging text and concepts for even the youngest child. Publishers from HarperCollins to Hyperion have re-issued many of her works, some with new illustrations and interpretations. HarperCollins, 32 pp., $15.95 each.

The Moffats

by Eleanor Estes

The wacky exploits of the Moffat family have delighted readers for years and garnered Estes a number of awards. She wrote five books about the Moffats, including *The Moffat Museum, Rufus M.*, and *The Middle Moffat*. Harcourt, 232 pp., $6 each.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

by Lewis Carroll, illustrated by DeLoss McGraw.

Carroll's strange tale of Alice takes on a startling new look, thanks to McGraw's brilliant, bizarre illustrations. HarperCollins, 192 pp., $19.95.

The Harry Potter Series

by J.K. Rowling

What's a new series like Rowling's doing in a column of classics? Featuring names like Quidditch and Dumbledore, her rich world of wizards and muggles have captivated readers of all ages in a what will no doubt be an enduring saga of good and evil. Soon to come, the fifth in the series: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.* Scholastic, $24.95 each title.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

by Betty Smith

This coming-of-age novel set in the tenements of New York City follows young Francie as she learns about life and love in the 1920s and '30s. The new version features an introduction

NEA READING ROOM

With all this talk of classics, let's not forget our good friend Dr. Seuss and his tales of Seussian delight. The Random House editions of *The Cat in the Hat, Green Eggs and Ham,* and *Yertle the Turtle* continue to captivate readers. Looking for more information to share with your students? Interested in reading tips for parents? A brand new feature of the NEA Read Across America Web site will offer author interviews, book lists, and reading tips.

Plus, you'll continue to find a wide range of reading activities to celebrate NEA's Read Across America literacy effort year-round, and materials for the grand Seuss-celebration taking place March 1 next year. Go to www.nea.org/readacross.

The Cat in the Hat & Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. 1957, 1997 All Rights Reserved

A Cautionary Tale

The problems with 'classics' and 'award winners.'

A "classic" is supposed to be a book that's stood the test of time. Surprisingly, many of the books we deem "classics" haven't passed that test. They're more the beneficiaries of marketing hype. So says Leonard S. Marcus, noted children's book historian and book critic for *Parenting* magazine, who spoke recently with *NEA Today*'s Anita Merina.

Why the caution on classics?

If you look at all of the books now labeled classics, you'll find that some of the attention is richly deserved—while others don't truly warrant the fuss they receive.

Most of the books listed on these pages are true classics, because they've remained fresh and fascinating through the years. But classics are often a mixed bag.

This is particularly true of award-winning books such as Newbery and Caldecott winners. Just because they've received an award doesn't mean they're classics or should become required reading, particularly in schools.

Why not? What's wrong with exposing students to such books?

It's not the book, it's the attitude. Too often, children are asked to read the Newbery winners or the classics with the message that they're supposed to like them. When a child doesn't, instead of questioning the teacher or librarian, the child begins to wonder, "What's wrong with me?"

Maurice Sendak had a wonderful reply when told of a child who didn't like *Where the Wild Things Are*. He said he would rather the child throw the book away than be forced to like it. At least the first reaction was an authentic one.

With so many excellent new writers, why reissue so many classics?

Many publishers like to trade on known names. That's why you see so many different publishers producing versions of E.B. White classics or books by Margaret Wise Brown.

As I was working on my biography of Brown [*Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened by the Moon*], I discovered more and more people were interested in marketing her work because of the popularity of *Good Night Moon*. It meant, to me, that you can sell a lot of things when you have an accomplished name.

There are some truly creative examples of her work, such as Hyperion's *Scarecrow Boy*, illustrated by David Diaz. But there have been more second-rate works of hers published than truly needed to be published.

What are some good reissues?

One good example can be found in the new *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by DeLoss McGraw. This artist used really wild illustrations to challenge the reader. Another is the reissue of the *Trumpet of the Swan*, this time illustrated by Fred Marcellino. Fred's illustrations are much better than the original illustrations of the book.

Anything make you cringe?

Books based on movies that have little to do with the original book. *Shrek* and *Stuart Little* are good examples. The movies are great, with real technical firepower but the follow-up books, particularly in the case of *Shrek*, don't have much of a connection.

Why is Harry Potter already reaching classic status?

Because you've got a great story in the hands of a gifted writer. I'm enjoying Rowling's books because she is an engaging narrator. I think of her as the host of a party introducing us to many wonderful characters. Even now, her books reach out to disenfranchised readers and hold on to them. ✔

Leonard Marcus's forthcoming book Side by Side *(Walker & Co.) describes collaborations between authors and illustrators.*

by Anna Quindlen.
Scholastic, 159 pp. $15.95.

Eloise

by Kay Thompson

A new generation is discovering this precocious and pretentious resident of New York's Plaza Hotel. And for better or worse, she's still got appeal—kids still go to the Plaza Hotel to look for her. Simon & Schuster, 44 pp., $17.

The Book of Rhythms

by Langston Hughes

A new foreword by musician Wynton Marsalis introduces Hughes's rich description of the rhythm and music of words, and a sampling of his poetry. Oxford, 64 pp., $9.95.

The Snowy Day

by Ezra Jack Keats

Keats artwork brightens this and other titles featuring the loving adventures of Peter, his family, and his dog, Willie. Penguin, 32 pp., $6.99. Also great: *John Henry: An American Legend*, which brings the tale alive for younger readers. Knopf, 32 pp., $5.99.

The Giving Tree

by Shel Silverstein

It's the 25th anniversary of this book about friendship and sacrifice, and HarperCollins has re-released the book with a CD of Silverstein reading the book. HarperCollins, 32 pp., $25.99.

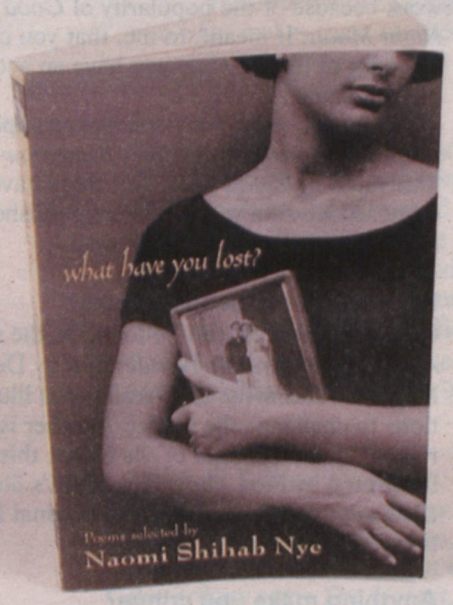
—Anita Merina

The Margaret Wise Brown classic Two Little Trains takes on a new look, courtesy of well-known illustrators Leo and Diane Dillon.

Grappling with Grief

Books that help children of all ages deal with grief and loss.

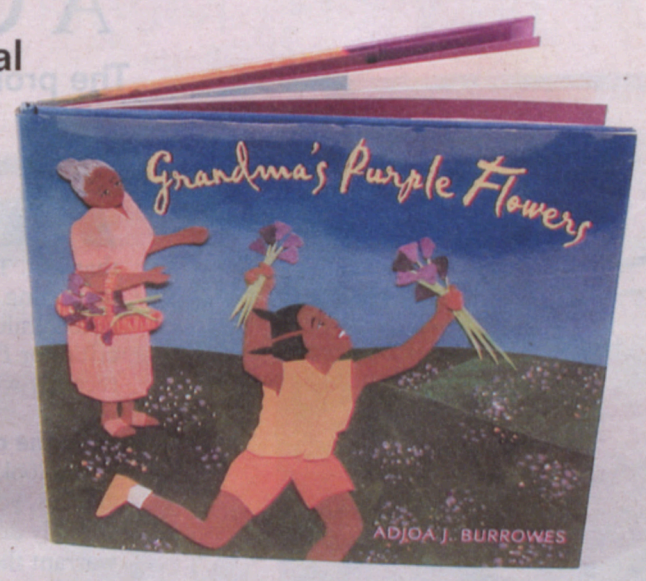
Writers and publishers have discovered that an enormous number of children deal with grief and loss. Ironically, their book titles have appeared at a time in the nation's history when we need them a great deal. Some of the best:



What Have You Lost?
by Naomi Shihab Nye
A collection of poems about loss—loss of life, of love, of innocence, of things that have mattered to a person at one time—and finding something in return. Shihab Nye had spent years collecting these poems, some by veteran writers, others by teens. HarperCollins, 206 pp., $9.95.

The Color of Absence
edited by James Howe
A collection stories by well-known writers, including Walter Dean Myers, Avi, and Katherine Patterson, who know that loss is a familiar theme for adolescents. Atheneum, 238 pp., $16.

Goodbye Mousie
by Robie H. Harris
A young child deals with the death of his favorite pet and the feelings that follow. Simon & Schuster, 32 pp., $16.



Grandma's Purple Flowers
by Adjoa J. Burrowes
In this story about life, death, and renewal, a young girl mourns the death of her grandmother—and discovers that keeping her grandmother's garden is a way of keeping grandma's spirit alive. Lee and Low, 32 pp., $16.

Ghost Wings
by Barbara M. Joosse
A young girl loses her grandmother but gains an understanding of celebrating her life in Mexico's Day of the Dead festivities. Simon & Schuster, 32 pp., $16.

A Story for Hippo: A Book About Loss
by Simon Puttock
This picture book tells the story of best friends Hippo and Monkey. When Hippo dies, Monkey learns what to do about his sad feelings and how to remember his friend. Scholastic, 32 pp., $15.95.

Saying It Out Loud
by Joan Abelove
Written for young adult readers, this is the poignant story of one young woman struggling to come to grips with the loss of her mother. Penguin Putnam, 136 pp., $5.99.

When Children Grieve
by John W. James and Russell Friedman
The authors of *The Grief Recovery Book* offer comforting advice for adults struggling to help children deal with death, divorce, moving, and other losses. HarperCollins, 268 pp., $24.

Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One
by William C. Kroen, Ph.D., LMHC
This guide for grown-ups uses anecdotes to assist parents, teachers, counselors, and other adults in helping a child cope with the death of a parent, sibling, or friend. Free Spirit Publishing, 100 pp., $13.95.

Sudden Impact

This poem, nestled in Shihab Nye's What Have You Lost? *captures a moment of loss, and the realization that in a single moment, one's world has changed.*

Sudden

If it had been a heart attack, the newspaper might have used the word *massive*,
as if a mountain range
had opened inside her, but instead

it used the word *suddenly*, a light coming on

in an empty room. The telephone

fell from my shoulder, a black parrot repeating
something happened, something awful

a Sunday, dusky. If it had been

terminal, we could have cradled her
as she grew smaller, wiped her mouth,
said goodbye. But it was

sudden,

how overnight we could be orphaned
& the world become a bell we'd crawl inside
& the ringing all we'd eat.

Nick Flynn

Pique Your Imagination

New and noteworthy titles pour forth from publishers.

Looking for a few good books? You don't have to look far. These books offer a welcome respite from overhyped television and movie tie-ins and a challenge to readers young and old. Their authors provide refreshing glimpses of new and old worlds and tell stories that take readers on an enjoyable ride. Coupled with the lush, varied work of skilled illustrators, these books are worth a look.

FICTION

Where on Earth Is My Bagel?

by Frances Park and Ginger Park

A Korean boy's craving for a New York bagel sends his village on a culinary quest that leads all the way to Manhattan. Lee and Low, 32 pp., $16.

Fishing in the Air

by Sharon Creech

A young boy goes on an unusual fishing trip with his father, where the lines blow about in the wind and the illustrations stretch the imagination. HarperCollins, 32 pp., $16.

Kit's Wilderness

by David Almond

A challenging yet enjoyable book for teens, this sequel to Almond's popular book *Skellig* follows 13-year old Kit Watson and his friends as they grapple with the harsh realities of their lives and toy with the mysteries of death and magic. Delacorte Press, 229 pp., $4.99.

A Movie on My Pillow: Una pelicula en mi almohada

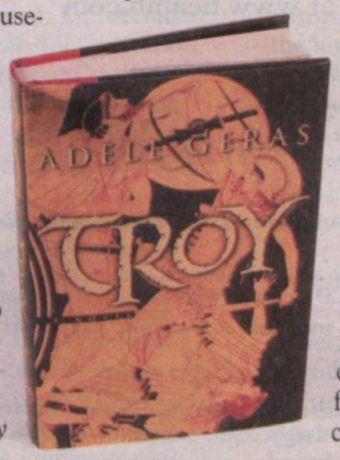
By Jorge Agueta

A young boy holds onto his Salvadoran heritage even as he carves out a new life in San Francisco, the two lands forming a patchwork of dreams. Children's Book Press, 32 pp., $15.95.

Troy

by Adele Geras

A gripping account of the Trojan War, this time seen through the eyes of Trojan women.The book follows orphan sisters Xanthe and Marpessa, who work in the household of a Trojan family. Harcourt, 352 pp., $17.



What My Mother Doesn't Know

by Sonia Sones

The poetic sequel to Sones' acclaimed first book, *Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy*. This time, Sones looks at love in her collection of poems. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 259 pp., $8.99.

The Master Swordsman and The Magic Doorway

Retold and illustrated by Alice Provensen.

Two legends from ancient China are retold with lush detail. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 32 pp., $16.

NON-FICTION

Wounded Knee

by Neil Waldman

A fascinating look at the events and clashes of culture that led up to the tragedies of Wounded Knee. A portion of the book proceeds go to the Oglala Lakota College Endowment Fund. Atheneum Books, 54 pp., $18.

Brooklyn Bridge

by Lynn Curlee

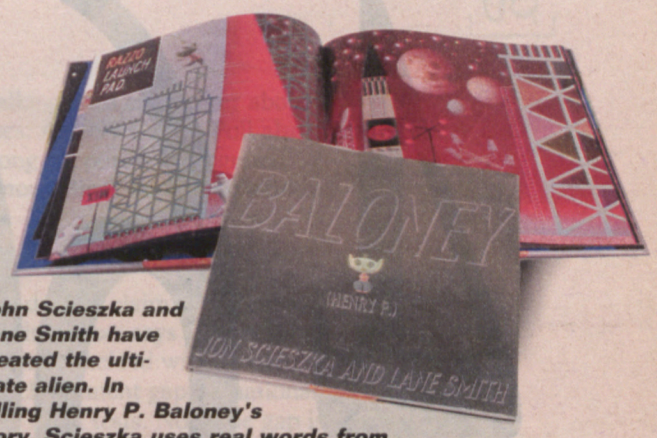
A celebration of one of the most famous landmarks and grandest sights in New York City, this book follows the history of the Brooklyn Bridge and features a now-poignant view of the World Trade Center. Simon & Schuster, 40 pp., $18.

The Hope Tree–Kids Talk about Breast Cancer

by Laura Numeroff and Wendy S. Harpham, M.D.

Children's author Laura Numeroff and physician Wendy Harpham offer a forum for children to write and illustrate their feelings about their moms' breast cancers. Proceeds go to the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Simon & Schuster, 32 pp., $12.

Out of This World Yet Part of It, Too



John Scieszka and Lane Smith have created the ultimate alien. In telling Henry P. Baloney's story, Scieszka uses real words from Swahili to Italian, teaching kids that reading new words can be great fun. Penguin Putnam, 32 pp., $18.

Anne Frank in the World

by the Anne Frank House

This poignant photo essay follows Anne Frank from 1929 to 1945, and includes more than 250 photos, many of them never before published. Knopf, 54 pp., $18.95.

Mansa Mura

By Khephra Burns

This book, lavishly illustrated by Leo & Diane Dillon, chronicles the life of Mansa Mura, one of Africa's most celebrated kings, his escape from slave traders, and path to greatness. Harcourt, 56 pp., $18.

Storm Maker's Tipi

by Paul Goble

In this beautifully illustrated book, a detailed description on pitching a tipi accompanies Goble's retelling of the American Indian legend of the Storm Maker, who granted the first tipi to the Blackfoot people to protect them from bad weather. Simon & Schuster, 40 pp. $18.

Woody Guthrie: Poet of the People

by Bonnie Christensen

This picture-book biography follows the life of this unassuming man who championed the poor with his music. The book is illustrated with hand-tinted woodcut-like illustrations and includes the lyrics to Guthrie's songs. Random House, 32 pp., $15.95.

Bad Boy

by Walter Dean Myers

The acclaimed children's author talks about his own childhood and how he turned to books and writing for answers. HarperCollins, 224 pp., $8.99.

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**All other bank APYs shown in the comparison chart are valid as of 8/31/01, based on a $2,500 minimum opening deposit and a term of 18 months. Source – *Informa Research Services*, 8/31/01.

†Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse (or domestic partner) and children.

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Reversing Course

American schools are becoming more segregated and the achievement gap is growing.

A new report from the Harvard University Civil Rights Project, Schools More Separate, *finds that America started down the road to racially integrated schools in 1954 and is now headed in the opposite direction. This turnabout may be one reason for the growing achievement gap between minority and white students.*

What do statistics show?

If you're an average white student in a U.S. classroom, most of the faces around you will mirror your own. If you're Black or Latino, most classmates will be "of color."

The researchers say 70 percent of Black students and 75 percent of Latinos now attend predominately minority schools, an increase of about 7 percent for each group since 1980.

More than a third of Black and Latino students go to schools with 90 to 100 percent minority populations.

Poverty hits hard at high-minority schools. The average Black or Latino student attends a school with a 40 percent poverty rate. That is twice the percentage for the average white child.

White students are the most segregated. On average, their schools are 80 percent white.

Asian immigrants are much less isolated. Most go to schools where only a few children speak their native language.

How and why did this happen?

Concentrated in the South, most federal desegregation efforts occurred 30 to 35 years ago. Southern schools became the nation's most integrated. Enforcement waned with the Nixon Administration, and in 1974, the Supreme Court blocked city-suburban desegregation attempts, setting the stage for high-minority, high-poverty districts in major U.S. cities.

Then, in the 1990s, court rulings released districts from long-standing desegregation orders.

Today, Black and Latino families moving into suburbs find their schools increasingly segregated. The report says the causes of resegregation include low birthrates for whites, higher rates for minorities, non-white immigration, and the tendency of whites to avoid high-minority schools if they have alternatives.

Is the issue of resegregation that critical?

Gary Orfield, principal author of the Harvard study, says it's foolish to bet that separate but equal can work. "We tried this from 1896 to the 1960s," he says. "The equal part was never enforced.

Curtis Parker

"High-poverty schools end up with less-experienced teachers, fewer resources, and lower expectations," says Orfield. "Visit schools in a high-poverty area, and then walk into a school in a more affluent neighborhood. The disparities are obvious."

Getting good teachers into disadvantaged schools is critical, he adds. But he warns, "Teachers can't solve everything. If they're going to be punished for that, they'll just leave."

Some high-poverty elementary schools have met with success, he acknowledges. Their secret: experienced teachers and a great principal.

But, he adds, "What happens is the principal gets promoted and the school falls apart. Successes never spread systemwide and almost never happen on the high school level."

What about testing?

The time may be ending when we think we'll close the achievement gap with more tests, says Orfield. "One day we'll look back on this myopic period and it will seem stupid."

Do parents and students want diverse schools?

Orfield reports "extraordinarily positive attitudes" among high school students in integrated classrooms. White and minority students report they have friends of different races and feel comfortable talking with each other about racial issues. A 1999 Gallup Poll also shows strong support for integrated schools among Black and white adults.

What are the consequences of resegregation?

Although it doesn't claim direct cause and effect, the report says the period of desegregation coincided with a narrowing of the achievement gap on national reading and math tests. Now, the gap is getting bigger again.

With jobs and income so closely linked to education, the report sees problems mounting for students in high-poverty schools. Schools with concentrations of whites, Asians and middle-class students have more accelerated classes, more experienced staff, and better college connections.

With graduation standards rising and affirmative action programs on the decline, minority students isolated in poor schools can suffer life-long penalties, the report concludes.

As the United States and its workplaces become more diverse, whites in segregated schools will also be disadvantaged, says Orfield. "So many white suburban kids don't know what's going on in an interracial environment. There's fear on their faces when put in such a situation."

Can we reverse this trend?

Desegregation has been most successful in large countywide districts that promote racial balance through magnets or other choice programs, the report says. It urges the expansion of these programs.

The report also proposes more teacher exchanges between cities and suburbs, and two-way bilingual schools where students help each other achieve fluency.

And it suggests a study of school and housing policies to avoid massive resegregation of inner suburbs.

"We need stable interracial neighborhoods, says Orfield. "We'll get there eventually, but we'll lose a generation in the meantime." ✔

—Mary Anne Hess

For more: The full report is at www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights/.

Scheduled for Success

A year-round school calendar helps low-income Denver students achieve.

Photos by David Zalubowski

Becky Wissink says children learn more when summer vacation is shortened even if the total number of school days stays the same.

In 1995, the faculty of Colfax Elementary School in Denver, Colorado launched an intensive campaign to enlist parent support. They weren't talking about coming to parent-teacher conferences or monitoring homework, important as those are. What they wanted was approval for a new school calendar that they believed could boost student achievement.

School calendars generally have a lot to do with tradition and very little to do with the learning needs of students, note these educators. But the calendar that Colfax finally adopted is specifically designed for the school's children.

Diane Palmer and Becky Wissink say the new schedule has proven its value.

It's a year-round calendar with nine- or ten-week periods of school, alternating with two- or three-week breaks. Summer vacation is only six weeks.

Colfax is in a low-income neighborhood. Studies have long documented that student achievement falls back during long summer vacations for many low-income students, and Colfax was no exception. Teachers had to spend the first month of school reteaching many concepts.

Because the breaks are shorter now, students retain more.

And when students return to school, "they actually still remember how to behave," says Becky Wissink, who was a Title I teacher when the change took place. She now leads the Denver Classroom Teachers Association.

Colfax in the past also faced a special problem: many of its families are from Mexico, and many parents took their children out of school around Christmas to visit relatives in Mexico. The new longer mid-winter break has resulted in lower absenteeism.

With creative use of grant money, Colfax is able to run special programs during the breaks to give many students extra help and keep them connected to academics.

In one recent program, third grade teacher Diane Palmer helped students learn about the United States. Reading, music, and dance were all incorporated in her lesson plans. Then she had her students paint a huge map of the United States on the blacktop outside of the school.

"These programs add about 20 extra days to our calendar," says Palmer. "Any student is welcome to join. The focus is both learning and having fun."

Of course, the calendar can't solve all of the school's problems. For one, students are constantly moving in and out. With parents forced to move because their jobs end or housing becomes unaffordable, Colfax has a 160 percent annual turnover. Wissink says about 70 percent of the students who start the year are still in class at the end, but the other 30 percent turn over several times.

The school has made other improvements besides the new calendar, such as starting full-day kindergarten. But Wissink believes the new schedule deserves much of the credit for keeping Colfax off the Colorado list of schools

Idea Exchange

Vertical Forest

To teach my third and fourth graders about the layers of the rainforest, I chose four students of varying heights. The tallest stood behind the rest with his arms reaching up, representing the emergent level. I had the next tallest stand in front of the emergent level with hands spread horizontally: the canopy. A shorter child knelt in front with hands down at the side: the understory. The shortest child sat with crossed legs in front of the understory: the forest floor. After this modeling, students acted out the layers in groups of four.

Alexis Schoen
Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

Book Source

My students and I devised a way to increase our library at no cost.

At the beginning of the year, I send home a letter asking families to search for children's chapter books that are no longer used and donate them to the library.

As each book arrives, the student's name is placed on the inside cover, along with a note on how well they liked the book. I find students are more likely to read books that their friends have read.

Not only has our library grown, but students have formed voluntary discussion groups.

Jennie Eddy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Seating Charts

After many instances of students switching seats (with a substitute teacher), I finally developed a foolproof plan.

Our office has a computer CD with a photograph record for all students (supplied by the yearbook company).

Using cut-out pictures printed from the CD and a glue stick, I now have a seating chart that includes names and pictures.

When I need to change it, I just peel up the photos and relocate the students to their new seats. No more switching-seats tricks, and fewer problems for my substitute.

Laura Smith
Reedsport, Oregon

Works 4 Me
nea's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

Have a great idea? You can pass along your tip to *NEA Today*'s 2.6 million readers in one of five ways:

- By mail: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
- By phone: 202/822-7201
- By fax: 202/822-7206
- By E-mail: Ideas@list.nea.org
- Through the Web: www.nea.org/neatoday

with low achievement scores.

The idea of switching to a year-round calendar came from a teacher at an informal after school get-together at a restaurant where Colfax staff members were discussing some of the problems they were facing.

It was an idea that took off. There were, however, concerns from parents. Many were not sure what they would do with their children during the breaks.

Wissink maintained that the school was not a child-care institution, and parents were encouraged to send their children to the intersession programs, which partially solved the problem.

Eighty-five percent approval

The superintendent told the staff that 85 percent of the families with children at the school had to agree before the schedule change could take effect.

That was a tall order. "You can't get 85 percent to agree on a flavor of ice cream, let alone changing the school calendar," Wissink notes.

On the first try, 70 percent of the families gave their approval—not enough. Then teachers got on the phone, and the principal went door-to-door in the community, until finally they got the number they needed.

Wissink says the new schedule has been good for teachers as well as students. "You give it your all for nine weeks. Then you have two or three weeks off to get revitalized," she says.

"You give it your all for nine weeks. Then you have two or three weeks to get revitalized."

—Becky Wissink

"Sometimes, people don't want to lose the long summer vacation, but you have to live through the whole cycle to see what it's like—including the long breaks in the fall, winter, and spring.

"Most schools come back in the winter on January 2. But with the year-round schedule, you have another week after all the festivities to pull yourself together."

Wissink and Palmer have visited other schools to tell teachers and parents about the benefits of the revised calendar. In 1995, Colfax was the only Denver school with a year-round schedule. Today, there are 13.

"I think these schools saw how much Colfax benefited and decided to try it themselves," says Palmer.

"This is the best thing we have done, for both students and teachers." ✔

—Urmila Subramanyam

For More: E-mail Wissink: bwissink@nea.org.

[DILEMMA]

How do you cut a student from a sports team, or any team?

If you have just cause, it should be simple. Talk to the student when other students are not around, but I would have an adult witness there. Tell them the reasons they are being removed, specifically.

Then you must be the adult and hold your ground. If your students are like mine, they will "one more chance and I'll do better" you to death, but rarely change significantly.

If you don't have just cause, don't do it.

Jason Vandergrift
Middle school science teacher
Cumming, Georgia

■ First, speak with the team about expectations and standards. Then, speak privately with the student and explain how you view the shortcomings. Ask him or her for input, and then state clearly what must be changed or achieved to stay a team member. You might both need to sign a contract stating standard, time frame, and consequence.

I have used this approach with students being excluded from cooperative learning groups in the regular education classroom.

With one third grader who was totally mainstreamed but quite obstinate, I went to her classroom at the beginning of each day and before and after each recess to review our agreement with her.

After we started this, she no longer created a disruption when excluded from some group activities.

Joyce Lorenzen
Special education teacher
Corvallis, Oregon

■ I coach middle school girls soccer and boys baseball. Each year, I must turn down half of the students who want to participate.

So I "lay it on the line" at the first tryout. I let the students know exactly what they're up against—how many slots are open, how many students are trying out.

I tell them they may be good, but they need to be better than the other students.

At the start of the last day of tryouts, I ask if anyone feels they haven't gotten a fair chance. At the end, I announce the team(s).

I tell the students how impressed I was at their effort and say I am sorry I can keep only a certain number.

Lastly, I say I will not answer any questions today, but they should go home, think about how they did, talk to their parents and their friends, and then the next day I will answer any questions. I also offer them the opportunity to be team manager.

I do not post a list. Not making a team is hard enough. They don't need other students seeing the names.

With this procedure, the entire process seems to be easier for everyone.

Rob Solomon
Seventh grade math teacher
East Windsor, New Jersey

■ In the first round of girls basketball tryouts, I post the students who have made it to the second round. I invite all students who did not to talk with me about the skills they need to work on to get on the team in the future.

For those who played junior varsity the past year and do not have the skills to play at the varsity level, I try to find positions in which they can still be involved.

Statisticians, managers, and videographers are important to our program, and these roles let the student-athlete stay involved with a sport they love.

Michele Mathis
Special education teacher
Enterprise, Alabama

■ I give each girl who tries out for my junior high basketball team a sealed letter. One is the "Congratulations" letter. The other is the "I'm sorry" letter, in which I point out that there are many other activities they can involve themselves in, and I say, good luck.

The privacy of the letter allows them some dignity and avoids the public embarrassment of posting lists. I suggest they wait until they go home to open them.

Cutting a player is a coach's most difficult job.

Ed Martin
School counselor
Hawley, Pennsylvania

Ted Pitts

Got an Answer?

How do you stop kids from teasing?

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@list.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202/822-7206. Please include your name, city, state, and job title. Published respondents will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

Learning

TEAMWORK

Making Schools Safe Through Crisis Intervention

Thanks to a grant from the Elizabeth Education Association, Joe Galego trains New Jersey teachers and ESP in crisis management.

Joe Galego

Elizabeth, New Jersey, can be a tough place for kids to grow up, according to school security guard Joe Galego. "Some kids here are lucky to have a place to go home to," Galego says. "They need so much more.

"They have forgiving hearts, but sometimes they say things not knowing that even words do hurt," he adds.

Galego works as a security guard at George Washington Elementary, the largest elementary school in New Jersey. Though incidents of school violence continue to be reported, Galego takes a pro-active approach to maintaining safe schools in Elizabeth, recognizing that it takes all education employees for the effort to be successful.

Through a Take Pride in Public Education grant that he received from the Elizabeth Education Association, Galego is training district staff members in nonviolent crisis intervention. The program focuses on making children, staff, and parents feel safe at school and helping them learn to handle potentially violent situations.

Galego received four days of training by the Crisis Prevention Institute in New York City before he became a certified instructor. From there, he presented the program to members of his local Association and parents. He started by training his fellow 72 security guards in Elizabeth. All together, he's taught 130 staffers, with more trainings set for this school year.

"I got a better response than expected," said Galego, who started the trainings in May 2000. "The guards were very receptive. I work with elementary students, but I made sure to gear training to those who work with middle school and high school students as well."

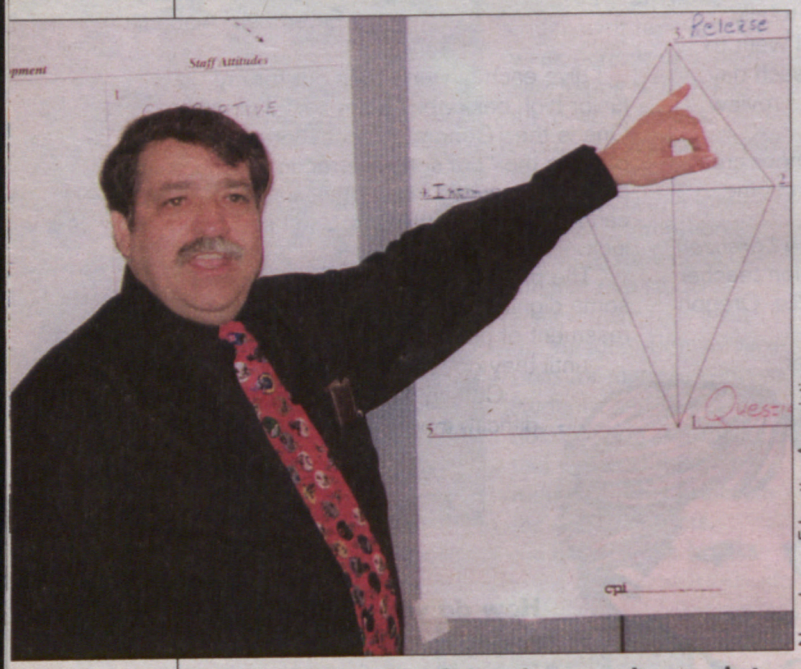
Galego also provided training to 26 teachers over two Saturdays. The teachers earned six hours of professional development credit while developing skills for dealing with students in crisis.

"Ninety percent of the time teachers handle a crisis before security gets there," said Galego. "It's important to know how to handle these situations. Your reaction can seriously affect the outcome."

Highlights of what Galego conveys to his trainees are:

- "We have to realize that too often kids don't know better. We have to teach them to deal with their emotions in a positive way," he says. "By being supportive and finding out the history of a child in crisis, we can make a difference.
- "When a child reacts violently, it's not always their fault," Galego notes. "When a security guard challenges a parent and the parent disrespects the guard, how do you maintain composure while not being rude? Stay calm and in control. A steady tone helps. Avoid saying things you shouldn't."
- "Work as a team with your colleagues.
- "And never give up on kids. They teach us so much about survival, and they have a great willingness to please everyone who shows an interest in their work."

Galego came to education after holding a job at a detention center that housed illegal immigrants, and after being "downsized" at a pump manufacturer where he worked for 14 years. And he's now making the most of the



New Jersey Education Association

New Jersey's Joe Galego is a security guard at New Jersey's largest elementary school. He's trained more than a 100 school staff in crisis intervention.

Going the Extra Mile

Illinois custodial personnel **Bob Gillis** and **Don Bragg** went the extra mile for members of the Custodia Maintenance Unit Association. Over the past six years or so, the two have helped develop and define members' working relationship with the school administration and board of education. Their contract includes a partnership clause and job descriptions.

Oklahoma bus driver **Pat Miller**, a member of the Noble Support Personnel Association, is proud of the progress her local has made since it began bargaining 15 years ago. One of its successes is a bus discipline policy that the drivers were involved in creating. It defined how bus discipline was to be handled and opened communications between the drivers and administration. Miller and fellow member Shirley Jennings coordinate another project called "Bear Fair," which helps ready kindergartners for bus travel.

Each year, the Washington Education Association presents a host of awards to its members, recognizing them for the multitalented people they are. This year's awards included ESP scholarship grants to **Kay Pennington** from the Seattle Education Association, **Chet Pitner** from the Eagle Crest Education Association (Sekiu), and **Laurie Whitaker** of the Eastmont Paraprofessionals Association (East Wenatchee).

At NEA's Representative Assembly this July in Los Angeles, NEA President Bob Chase singled out eight special people whom he called heroes for the work they do on and off the job.

One of those cited was Oregon school

TEAM PLAYER

Books on The Bus

Name: **Terry Appelgate**

Job Title: Bus driver, Cherry Creek Schools, Englewood/Aurora, Colorado

Background: Colorado bus driver is my latest job. For 20 years I flew fighter jets for the Navy. Later, I ran a trucking company, then retired again to become a corporate consultant.

Bright Idea: I was never a reader, even in college. If I didn't pick it up in a college lecture, I wasn't going to pick it up. Then my wife, Suzannee, a middle school teacher, gave me *The Bridges of Madison County* a few years ago, and that got me started reading. Now, I hardly ever watch television, I always have a book going.

Anyway, last year she and I were talking about how kids need to read more. I wondered if they would read to and from school if they were allowed to go to the front of the lines to board the bus or get off first.

How it worked: In the morning, kids brought their books with them to the bus. When they get off, I would ask them how many books they've finished at home, on the bus, or at school. For the most part, they would tell the truth—I've taken to looking them in the eye. I kept track of the books on sheets posted in the buses.

End point: I wanted these kids to have an appreciation for reading, a chance to expand themselves. If one of them does, it's a success.

This year, my bus routes have changed and so have the kids. Many of my riders have problems with English, but we're working with the library personnel to get them books they can read. ✔

Andy Cross/*The Denver Post*

Books in hand and ready to read, students prepare to board the bus driven by Cherry Creek, Colorado, bus driver Terry Appelgate.

RESOURCES

The Latest Stats

For a relatively concise report on the nation's educational system, check out the eighth annual *Mini-Digest of Education Statistics* (2000). This two- by three-inch booklet offers a good summary of key data—including graduation rates, teachers' salaries, and government spending on education. To order, call 202/512-1800.

Have a Great Meeting

Not looking forward to that meeting next week? Maybe it's because meetings that you've attended in the past have not been fruitful.

For possible solutions, take a look at the 3M Corporation's Meeting Network site. This corporate giant seems familiar with the waste involved in having a bad meeting, as well as the benefits to all in a well-timed and planned gathering.

Chances are you'll get a kick out of the cartoons, and find the presentation kits useful.

There is some hawking of 3M products, but there's also plenty of useful information to help you (or your supervisor, if he or she needs it) make sure that your next meeting is a helpful one, and not a bore. Look at www.3m.com/meetingnetwork/.

Sites To Watch

Want to know all about who we are as a nation? Visit the Web at ww.census.gov for all the latest about America and Americans. For the latest information about consumer fraud—and a toll-free number to report it—log on to www.fraud.org. One more good site is www.students.gov/index.html, a U.S. Department of Education effort to help students and families plan the future beyond high school.

opportunities that his Association has to offer.

Galego sits on the executive committee of the Elizabeth Education Association. He also served as chief negotiator of the 3,500-member local, which includes all job categories, during its last negotiations session.

Rose Carreto, the local president, says it's the first time in the ten years she's been in office that a school support person served as chief negotiator.

"It's one of our goals in this local to unite the professional and support staffs," says Carreto. "Joe shows just how well support personnel can handle leadership positions."

Adds UniServ director Al Ramey, "Joe's a great example of of how important our ESP members are to NJEA and New Jersey's public schools." ✔

More on Pride Grants

The Elizabeth Education Association has taken on several initiatives through grants from its Take Pride in Public Education Committee.

- **Elizabeth High School teaching assistant Joe Cortico heads up a youth soccer league in cooperation with several local EA board volunteers.**
- **Michael Hunter, a security guard at the district administrative building, leads a basketball program during summer months that involves 300 kids ages 10-15.**
- **Elizabeth High School secretary Sally Hughes has organized a poetry festival during each of the last two years. Says local president Rose Carreto: "Kids at all levels submit poems, and last year there were 300 entries."**

bus driver Janis Eggert. Chase recognized Eggert for her unstinting efforts on behalf of the Lebanon, Oregon schools.

Thanks in large part to Eggert's efforts, Lebanon voters passed a school bond issue that will allow the construction of two new schools.

Eggert's next project is raising $4,000 to buy two new sousaphones for the Lebanon High Marching Band.

Two Maryland ESP members have won $1,000 leadership grants from the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education. Meera Nagarajan, a special education assistant in Howard County, will use her grant to learn a variety of new computer applications. Wanda Newman, an educational interpreter in Prince George's County, will learn advanced techniques and methodologies in interpreting. In all, 49 NEA members were awarded NFIE grants. For more information on the grants offered, visit www.nfie.org.

ADVANTAGE

FACE-TO-FACE COUNSELING

Your *NEA Valuebuilder*® counselor can show you how to take maximum advantage of your investment opportunities.

As an education professional, you have some unique opportunities to help you save for retirement, including a Tax Sheltered Account (TSA). While you may be familiar with or currently invest in a TSA, it's important that you know about some exciting changes that have recently taken place.

Two New Financial Products

Security Benefit has introduced two new TSA products: NEA Valuebuilder Mutual Fund TSA, which is available throughout the country, and NEA Valuebuilder Variable Annuity TSA, which is now offered in most states. Your knowledgeable NEA Valuebuilder Representative would be happy to discuss their advantages.

New Investment Possibilities

Recent legislative changes provide increased TSA contribution limits and "catch-up" opportunities for long-term education professionals. Under the new rules, you may be able to increase your contribution.

Now is the time to meet with your NEA Valuebuilder Representative to review your personal retirement picture and to make certain you're taking full advantage of your investment opportunities.

Call toll-free today to make an appointment with an NEA Valuebuilder financial representative

1-877-NEA8668 ext 3655

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VBNT1101

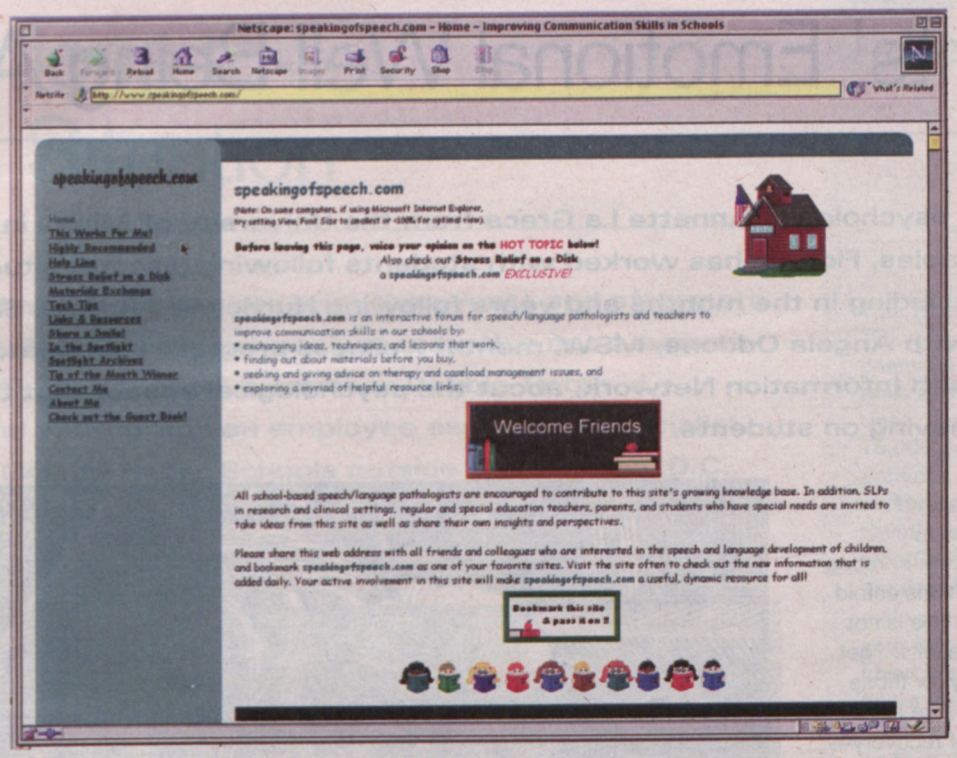
Power Timer

To encourage smooth transitions and incorporate technology using Microsoft Powerpoint presentation software, I have created mini-slide shows that communicate to my students exactly when a learning activity will begin.

I simply make a master slide that says, for example, "Math will begin in 5 minutes." You can set the timer to advance the slide in one minute, and add a sound effect to get their attention.

Using a copy of the slide master, change the next slide to read "Math will begin in 4 minutes." Continue to create your "Classroom Countdown" in this fashion until you get to your final slide (for example, "Math will begin in T-minus 10 seconds). Add a final slide (and sound effect) that indicates the new activity has begun. Students will look forward to "blasting off" into your next learning activity!

Jacqueline Nessuno
Third grade teacher
Mantua, New Jersey


Netscape: speakingofspeech.com - Home - Improving Communication Skills in Schools
speakingofspeech.com
Welcome Friends

A new site: www.speakingofspeech.com is a great source for all school staff.

Speaking Up

Check out www.speakingofspeech.com. Just launched in July, Speaking of Speech is a great place for all school-based speech/language pathologists and teachers (regular and special education) to exchange tips, techniques, and materials that improve communication skills in the schools.

Features include interactive message boards on a wide variety of topics, such as: *this works for me*! (read and post great ideas, lesson plans, motivators, and more); *highly recommended* (post favorite books, materials, Web sites, software, conferences, etc., or ask about materials before you buy); *tech tips* (tips for successful use of computers and assistive technology); *helpline* (seek and give advice on sticky problems); *hot topics* (sound off on a different topical issue each month); *materials exchange* (contribute and download great materials for your class or caseload); and *share a smile* (anecdotes that remind us why we do what we do). Other features include *in the spotlight* (in-depth description of a "highly recommended" material) and *links & resources* (an extensive and ever-growing list of great Web sites).

Each month, a lucky site contributor wins the Speaking of Speech CD—"A multitude of materials for busy teachers and SLPs."

Pat Mervine
Speech/language pathologist
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

The Search Is On

I am always looking for effective ways to help students develop their Internet searching skills. I have found several activities to be particularly successful with my fifth graders.

Internet treasure hunts are fun activities that provide students with a structured environment in which to search while practicing skills in critical thinking, discrimination, and reading. The challenge of the hunt also serves as a wonderful motivator!

I created a tiger treasure hunt on our school system Web site at www.cmcss.org to use with teachers at a technology in-service, but found that the children loved it, too.

Another wonderful way to guide students toward becoming savvy surfers is to create an ABCs Web page. Choose a curricular topic and assign each student a letter of the alphabet. Their task is to search the Internet for the very best Web sites about the topic beginning with their letter. You can see an example of our ABCs of the Human Today at http://members.aol.com/volsfive/body.html.

Anne Wall
Fifth grade teacher
Clarksville, Tennessee

Wherefore Art Thou?

I have videotaped students putting on puppet shows of "Romeo and Juliet" in their own modern language translations. Even students who did not seem interested in Shakespeare became involved with their group in the puppet show productions. Some groups even made up a "rap" opera of a scene from the play.

Barbara Lafaver
English and French teacher,
Antioch, California

My favorite Web site

Looking for quality academic historical research for high school and college students? Here's your site. Not only are there excellent topics and some wonderful resources, there are some "cool links" as well. www.snowcrest.net/jmike.

Mike Jenkins
Social science and history teacher
Foothill High School,
Redding, California

TALK TO US

Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a description (under 200 words, please!) to wiredclassroom@list.nea.org.

Is there a Web site, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to my favoritetech@list.nea.org.

Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by Fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Those published here will receive a sparkling *NEA Today* mug!

Bytes for Beginners

What's the difference between a "virus" and a "worm"?

Today's media seem to be filled with news about many different forms of computer viruses, probably because these pesky electronic infections are so mysterious. The most common are:

Virus. This infection is really a small computer program that imbeds itself inside a legitimate piece of software, such as a spreadsheet or E-mail program. Each time the program runs, the virus runs too, and it will usually either try to reproduce (by locating another program on your hard drive in which to imbed itself) or cause mischief with your hard drive—erase programs, delete certain file types, etc.

E-mail virus. An E-mail virus makes its way across the Internet by posing as an innocent attachment to a normal-looking E-mail. Once the attachment is downloaded by the unsuspecting recipient, the virus will do its damage and then usually try to replicate itself by sending itself to every address listed in the recipient's address book.

Worm. A worm, like a virus, is a small computer program. As its name implies, it inches across computer networks, looking for specific security holes (weak points in a software program; usually software that makes up part or all of a Network Operating System) in which to replicate itself.

A copy of a worm scans the network for software weaknesses that their creators have discovered and, as programmed, either wreaks havoc and/or replicates itself and moves on to the next computer with the same security hole.

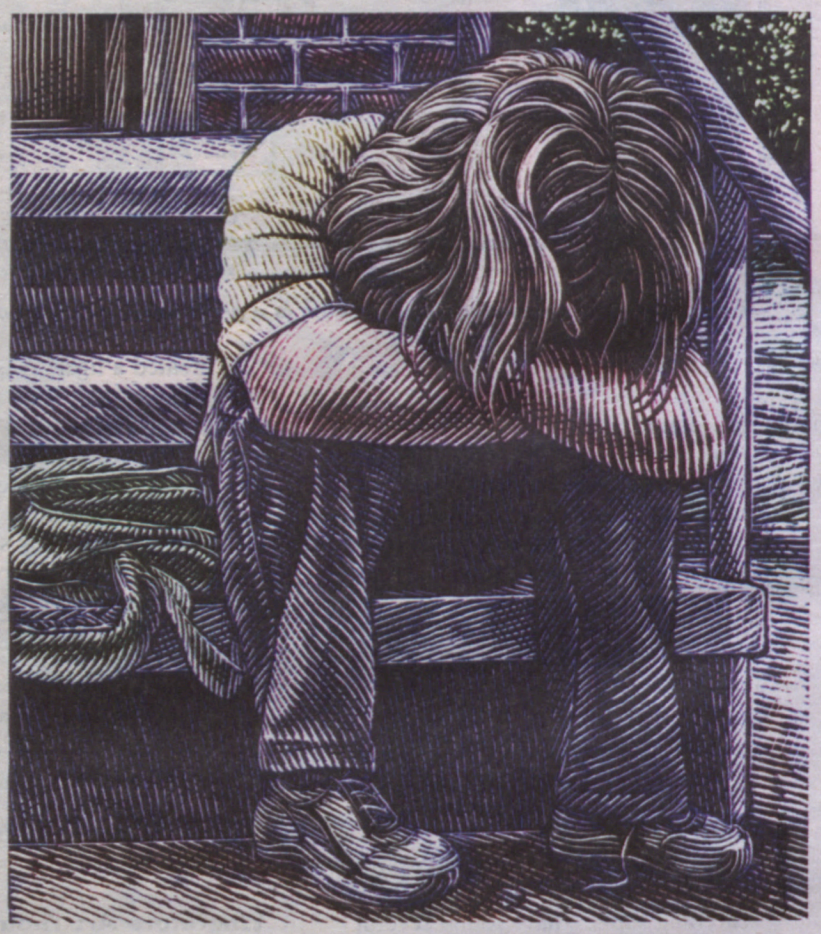
Trojan horse. A Trojan horse is a software program that claims to be one thing—a game or utility program—but isn't. It does its damage when you run the program. Trojan horses do not replicate automatically.

NIMDA is both a virus and a worm—it is a small program that attaches to other programs and depends on the Internet to "get around." If you are using Windows 95, 98, Millennium, NT, or 2000 software, you are vulnerable to this virus. Your computer can become infected if you:

- download E-mail attachments
- visit Web sites infected with the virus, or
- are connected to infected computers on a network system.

Students' Emotional Well-Being After a Crisis

Pediatric psychologist Annette La Greca from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, has worked with students following disaster situations, including in the months and years following Hurricane Andrew. She spoke with Angela Oddone, MSW, mental wellness program coordinator for the NEA Health Information Network, about the psychological impact that terrorism may be having on students.



What do school staff need to know now?

It's important for educators to recognize that children's reactions unfold over time. An event like this is not something children (or adults) "get over" quickly, especially for those with high levels of exposure to the disaster. The process of recovery—psychologically and otherwise—will occur very gradually over time.

Beyond initial crisis response, how can school staff help students recover from this experience?

Maintain a balance between sticking to routines and yet being flexible within those routines to respond to kids' needs. That will be key in the weeks and months ahead.

Everyone now is on a fast learning curve in terms of honing their skills at managing stress. By setting an example, school staff can teach students how to give themselves and each other time and permission to focus on the September 11 attacks and all aspects associated with it, including the psychological aspects. Equally important, however, will be teaching how to give ourselves and each other permission and opportunities to experience time off from these events as well.

What do school staff need to know about post-traumatic stress?

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress—for example, difficulties concentrating, greater irritability—are normal reactions to an abnormal event. I think that is the most important thing of all to keep in mind. We may be experiencing our emotions, our behaviors, and each other in ways that we have never experienced before.

Although stress symptoms [listed in box, top right] may be disconcerting to us at times, it is important to understand and remember that they are normal for a situation such as this one.

How might children's experience of the terrorism compare with that of adults?

Children can show any of the classic stress symptoms that we adults may also be experiencing. In particular, it may be helpful for educators to keep in mind that students may have more difficulty focusing at times. Changes in students' capacities to concentrate and pay attention may occur while they are at school and when they are at home in terms of completing homework assignments.

Some of the changes that we may notice in children will be psychological in nature. But other significant factors could come into play. For example, we might predict that a downturn in the economy may mean that some students will also be having to accommodate other types of adjustments at home, such as a parent's loss of a job.

We in the adult world are now living in an environment that requires us to tolerate an uncomfortable degree of uncertainty. The good news for children and schools is that we can maximize the certainty in children's lives through the routines they ordinarily experience at school. Those routines may also be comforting and helpful to school staff as well.

Can we expect measures like standardized test scores to be affected?

Yes, absolutely. We can expect test scores to be noticeably affected by the impact that terrorism has had on our country, especially for students who lost a family member or friend, or those who have close personal ties to the disaster sites.

From a statistical viewpoint, in some school districts, it may not be meaningful to compare scores from tests taken prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks to scores from tests taken in the months after that event.

When interpreting testing results, it is important to make sure that scores are an accurate indicator of what we are trying to measure. What was true before the terrorist attacks is now just more obvious: far too many variables exist—including those associated with the powerful and extenuating circumstances of our nation being attacked by terrorism— for standardized tests to truly measure school performance. ✔

One or more of these symptoms may indicate that a child is in distress*:

- Feeling more nervous, jumpy and irritable
- Having more stomachaches, headaches, or other physical complaints
- Greater difficulty concentrating in school (especially due to thoughts or feelings about the disaster, or because of lack of sleep)
- Fearful behavior, especially fear of being alone, being separated from family members, or fear that something bad will happen to a family member
- Extreme worry that another bombing/disaster may happen
- Loss of interest in previously preferred and enjoyable activities

***Note:** *As indicators of post-traumatic stress, these symptoms should be observable as a change that's occurred since the traumatic event occurred.*

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- **"Children Experiencing Disasters: Prevention and Intervention" by Annette La Greca in *Handbook of Psychological Services to Children and Adolescents* (Oxford Press).**

Web Sites

- **FEMA for Kids—www.fema.gov/kids/—from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.**
- **Helping Children Cope: A Guide to Helping Children Cope with the Stress of the Oklahoma City Explosion—www.apa.org/practice/kids.html—from the American Psychological Association.**
- **"Facts for Families" fact sheets from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry include: "Helping Children After Disaster"—www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/disaster.htm; and "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder"—www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/ptsd70.htm.**
- **The National Mental Health Association offers tips for parents in talking with their kids about tragedies. Go to http://www.nmha.org/reassurance/children.cfm.**

Normal Reactions to An Abnormal Situation

As school staff help their students cope with the events and aftermath of September 11, staff members themselves may also need support. Here's a glimpse at the work of NEA member Debbie Tipton, a licensed clinical social worker and an employee assistance specialist with Maryland's Montgomery County Public Schools outside Washington, D.C., where many members of the community were personally affected by the national tragedy.

Educators are primarily concerned with how their students are dealing with the events of September 11, but it is equally important for school staff to support each other.

That's the message that Debbie Tipton conveys to Maryland educators. She's part of the Montgomery County Schools Crisis team, a coalition of counselors, school security personnel and others who are available to help students and staff when a crisis occurs.

Immediately after the attacks, the team distributed information about their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counseling services through school counselors, administrators and listservs.

"In the days following the attacks," Tipton reports, "the EAP saw trauma reaction in some teachers, particularly those who had been through a previous traumatic event. We expect a greater need for our services as time goes on, however, as the initial crisis subsides and staff have more time to contemplate the ramifications."

Expect yourselves and colleagues to experience a range of reactions in the weeks to come. Some people may have trouble sleeping, may feel anxious and fearful—or, like their students, have difficulty focusing in the classroom.

"We don't know what a normal reaction is because we have been confronted with such an abnormal situation," says Tipton. "Help people to normalize their reactions by letting them know that whatever they're feeling is okay."

But Tipton adds that if symptoms last more than a couple of weeks or are interfering with normal functioning, then people need to seek professional help.

Tipton has urged schools to allow teachers and other staff time to talk with one another. "People need to talk about this, and they will continue needing to talk for weeks to come. The best thing we can do is be there to listen to each other."

On an individual level, Tipton suggests that "people be really gentle with themselves. Take care of yourself. Go home at the end of the day.

"Teachers tend to work really long hours," Tipton notes, "but this is a time to lower your ever-higher expectations of yourselves and take time out to do what you enjoy. Exercise, spend time with friends and family, do what nurtures you." ✔

Sandy Schaeffer

Debbie Tipton is part of the Montgomery County, Maryland schools crisis team, a group of school staff who are available to help students and staff when a crisis occurs.

Quick Tip

Sameta Rush

Ivars Mikelsons

The waning light and upcoming holiday season will challenge the best of us to get moving. Though it is particularly hard to think about exercise during this spiritually challenging time, it is crucial to keep our bodies healthy and our emotions balanced.

It is so important to rely on those around you in this time of national crisis and especially tell those we care about how we feel. I also find yoga and prayer/meditation to be helpful to quiet my mind.

Communicate what you feel as often as necessary. Take in a quiet moment and remember to breathe.

But now more than ever, we need to take stock in the great beauty we have around us and appreciate the strength we share as a diverse nation.

Sameta Rush teaches physical education, video production, and writing at Steamboat Springs High School and Strawberry Park Elementary, Steamboats Springs, Colorado. She can be reached by E-mail at srush@sailors.steamboat.k12.co.us.

NEA·HIN

From the **NEA Health Information Network**

■ GIVE THANKS, GIVE LIFE

This Thanksgiving, join the "Give Thanks, Give Life" campaign to raise awareness about life-saving donations. There are more than 75,000 desperately ill patients, including many children, who await a life-saving organ, tissue or blood donation. The single greatest boost to donation is dialogue—you must discuss your intentions with your loved ones so they can honor your request.

And what better time to do so than during Thanksgiving weekend, when families gather? Checking the "donor box" on your driver's license or carrying a signed donor pledge card is simply not enough.

To learn more about donation and how you can be involved in the campaign, visit www.organdonor.gov/givethanks.htm or www.shareyourlife.org.

■ NEA VIDEOS: SAFE SCHOOLS NOW

NEA's Safe Schools Now Network nine-part video series, created by the NEA in collaboration with several other national partners, is available for purchase. A discussion and resource guide is included with each video. $14.95 each for NEA members; $19.95 for non-members. The complete set of all nine videos is available for $115 for NEA members and $153 for non-members. To order, contact the NEA Professional Library at 800/229-4200 or order online at www.nea.org/books.

■ INDOOR AIR QUALITY AND STUDENTS

Poor indoor air quality (IAQ) can cause or exacerbate illnesses in children and lead to absence from school. Recent data suggest that poor IAQ reduces the ability to perform specific mental tasks requiring concentration, calculation, or memory. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has developed a three-page fact sheet on IAQ and student performance. Go to www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/perform.html for a copy.

High-Tech on the High Seas

Last year, Pennsylvania science teacher **Susan Carty** flew to Honolulu, boarded a scientific ship (photo, right) bound for Japan and Korea, and for 39 days helped conduct experiments on the role of aerosols in influencing the transfer of solar energy. Carty was one of 300 teachers who have gone on Teacher at Sea trips sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"Once you put your feet on board and realize you can't get off, it's scary," says Carty, who has taught middle school science for 14 years in West Chester. "But this was a tremendous learning experience. I'm so thankful my district allowed me to do it. I came back feeling younger and amazed at my new outlook."

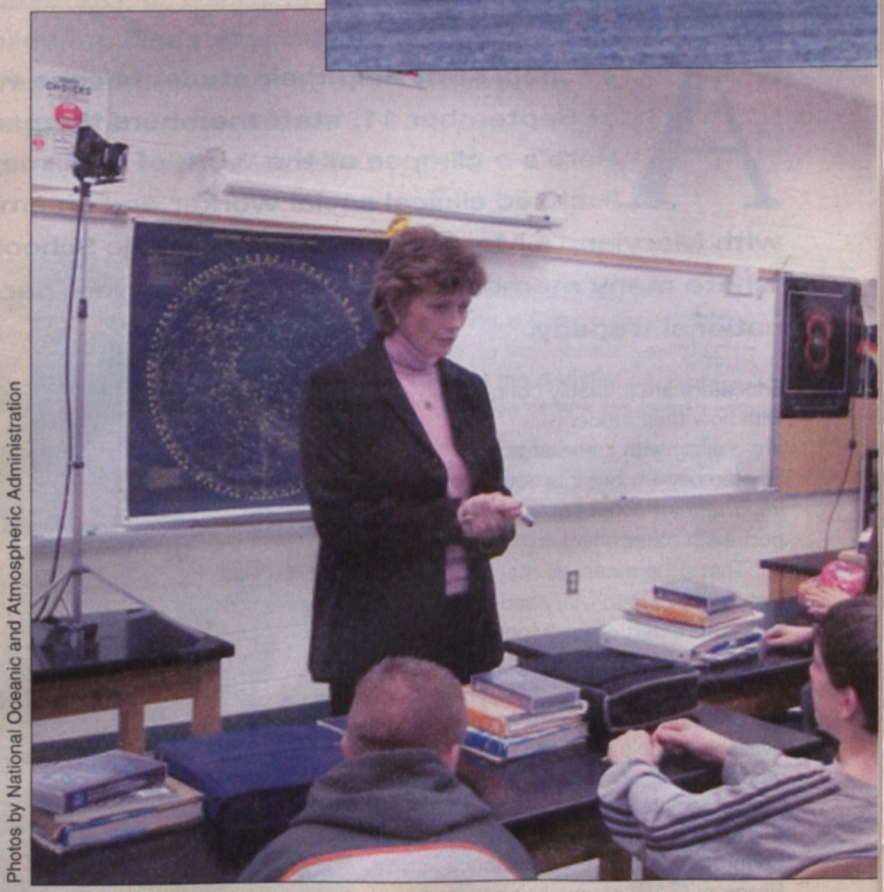
Why a teacher on board a high-tech ship with 30 professional scientists and other experts? "Teachers create connections scientists wouldn't otherwise understand," says John Kermond, communications director of NOAA's Office of Global Programs. "Teachers raise the level of awareness of academics. Scientists don't always know what the teachable moment is, like teachers do."

Carty notes that the scientists she worked with had difficulty relating to how teachers accomplish what they do. "They told me they'd have absolutely no idea how to teach 30 kids in a lab, and it felt good to be able to enlighten them," says Chester.

Dr. Kathleen Conn, West Chester's supervisor of Science and Technology Education, says, "We're proud of Susan. She made tremendous personal progress that will translate into real benefits for students."

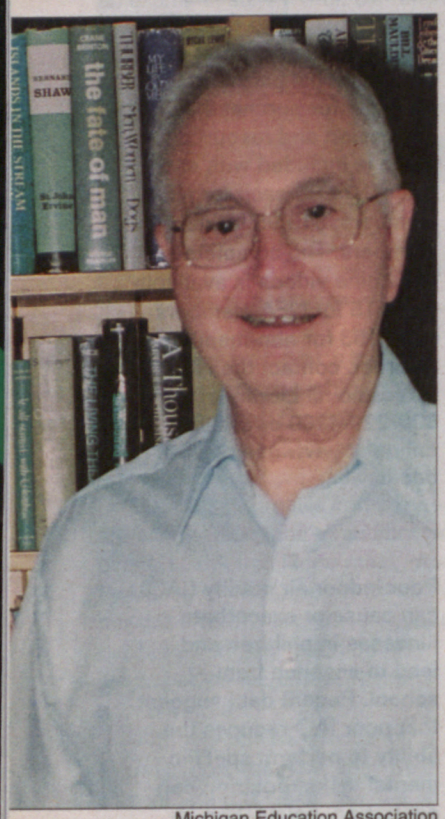
Both Conn and Carty strongly argue the importance of teachers getting a mid-career break. Says Conn, "Teachers make the most of this time. It's not a frill. Sabbaticals for professional growth are times of renewal. Susan's an excellent example of how much a teacher can accomplish during a sabbatical."

For more about the Teacher at Sea program, check the NOAA Web sites at www.tas.noaa.gov/ or www.ogp.noaa.gov/index.htm. Schedules for all NOAA ships, as well as data and photos of Carty's experience, are posted. ✔



Photos by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

56 Sets of Lesson Plans



Michigan Education Association

At 82 years old, **Ray Lawson** prides himself on being just as sharp as when he began his education career—56 years ago. And with this kind of history, Lawson may be the longest-serving educator in Michigan.

More than 18,000 students have passed through his classes at Rochester High School since he entered teaching in 1946, just two months after returning from Army duty during World War II. His salary: $2,700 a year.

The former Michigan Education Association president says one of the keys to staying so happy in the profession has been his ability to connect with students as he grows older.

"One of my biggest passions is keeping up to date and providing intriguing lessons for each new class of 17-year-olds," says Lawson, who opens his classroom door before 6 a.m. every day to students who need help.

"I throw out the former year's lesson plans each year," Lawson adds. "I don't plan until after I've met my class and see who they are."

He also expects students to challenge him. "Together we'll find answers," he says. "It helps keep me on my toes.

"I know I'll retire when I stop giving all I have to give," Lawson says. "But so far, that day hasn't come. I still think of teaching as a new experience." ✔

Swimming with the Sharks

"South Africa is one of three places in the world where you go if you're serious about sharks," says Arizona science teacher **Derrick Neill**. And earlier this year, Neill got a chance to get serious.

The Arts & Entertainment (A&E) network presented Neill with an all-expenses-paid trip to South Africa to dive with Great White sharks— as well as an hour-long television show documenting his experience.

Neill was selected to appear in an October episode of a show called "Ultimate Reality," billed as a new kind of "reality" television. Neill was one of ten ordinary people chosen this year by the network to fulfill their lifelong goals on camera.

"I've been a certified scuba diver since I was 16 years old-and obsessed with sharks since I first saw the movie *Jaws*," says the eighth grade teacher at Sierra Vista Middle School.

Filmed over two weeks in July in the waters off of Gansbaii, a small fishing village east of Cape Town, Neill spent endless hours underwater in a shark cage, face-to-face with his life's passion.

"Probably the scariest moment was when I reached my hand out of the cage to touch one of the sharks and I saw another shark out of the corner of my eye swimming toward my arm," says Neill.

The 21-year teaching veteran is excited to share the documentary with his students during their unit in oceanography. "It's not a typical reality show, about trivial matters or my personal problems," Neill notes. "It's a show with hard facts about shark behavior." ✔

Photos by Arts & Entertainment Network

A Storyteller's Tale

NEA-Retired member **Mozell Robinson** didn't set out to be a teacher. But after she got to the classroom, she stayed for 38 years. Now she's into a whole new career as a storyteller.

Whether it's a kindergarten classroom, a senior citizen center, a college campus, or a historic plantation, each site is home for Robinson's mixture of traditional African-American folktales and personal stories.

"Every one of my stories conveys a message to the audience and a lesson about African-American culture," says Robinson. "I try to get my audience intimately involved with my characters through the use of props and costumes and a variety of voices for my characters."

Robinson came to storytelling after a brief stint in acting. She was cast as a stand-in for Cicily Tyson and became hooked on performing. When curators for Historic Brattonsville, a 720-acre living village and Revolutionary War site, began looking for a storyteller to relate the experiences of plantation slaves, Robinson saw a chance not only to perform, but to educate.

Today, Robinson's brand of storytelling is in demand. "I think there's been a resurgence in storytelling because everyone is trying to get to the heart of their own history," Robinson notes. "When you listen to my tales, you develop a personal connection with history." ✔

Richburg Photo

Capturing a Century of Memories

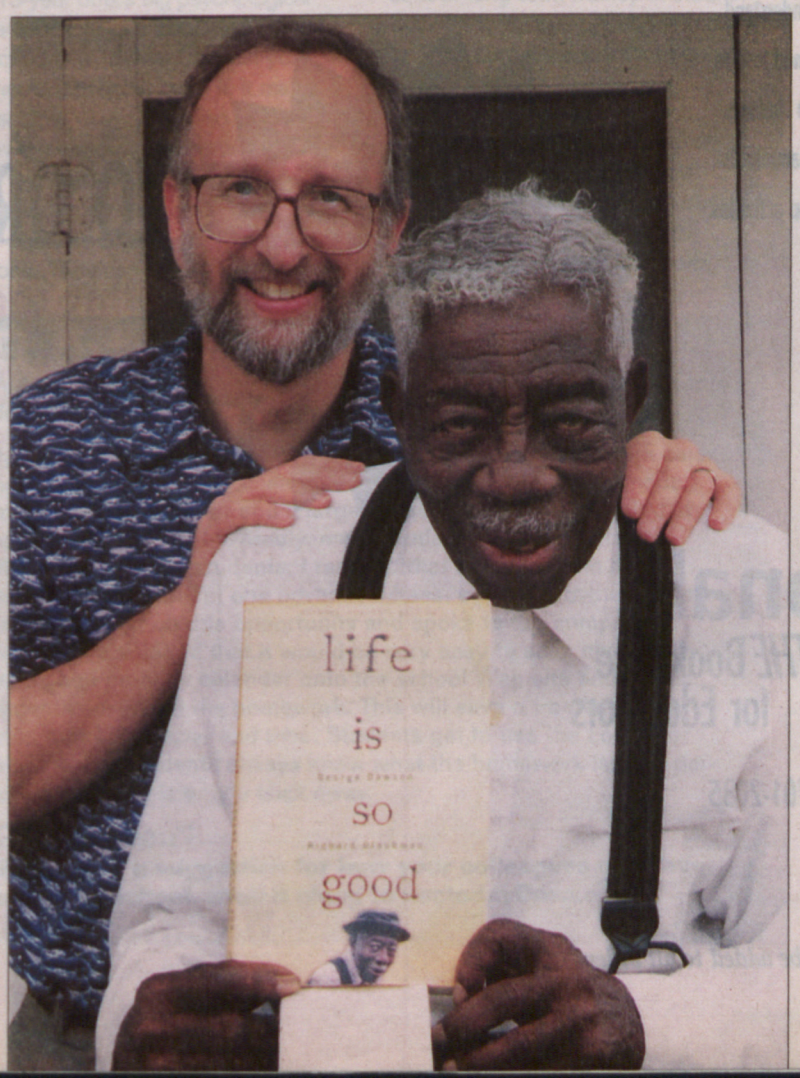
When NEA member **Richard Glaubman** read in a Seattle paper about George Dawson, who was learning to read at age 98, he knew he just had to meet this man.

So Glaubman, an elementary physical education teacher, flew to Texas and went to the classroom where Dawson was learning to read.

"From that day, we became the best of friends," says Glaubman. Sometimes he stayed weeks at a time with Dawson, talking and learning about his past.

As Glaubman listened to Dawson talk about lynchings, hate crimes, and discrimination, he decided Dawson's story needed to be told.

"I was so intrigued by his testimonies of the history of our country and the history of race relations, that I wanted to create a book about his experiences," says Glaubman.



Each session, Glaubman and Dawson would sit and talk while their conversations were recorded.

"Here was a man who had a century of history in his memory." explains Glaubman. "What struck me was that he had no regrets or bitterness about the past, and for the three years I knew him, he never judged anyone. He always did the best with what he could," Glaubman recalls.

Glaubman initially thought about creating an illustrated children's book. Then "I realized the book would be better as a novel, and I started writing it."

Glaubman's manuscript of just 70 pages was circulated to agents, then publishers. Random House published *Life Is So Good* last year.

This July, Glaubman—and 1,700 other people—accompanied Dawson's family to lay George Dawson down to rest at the age of 103.

Glaubman was amazed at the turnout for Dawson's funeral, because he hadn't realized how many lives had changed because of George Dawson's story.

"My world expanded through him, as his expanded through me," says Glaubman. "We taught each other things. To be able to see people from all over the world inspired by one man's quest for education was an amazing sight," says Glaubman.

Glaubman says that *Life Is So Good* is good reading for high school students. "It's about our country's history," he says, "seen through the eyes of someone who lived it for a century." ✔

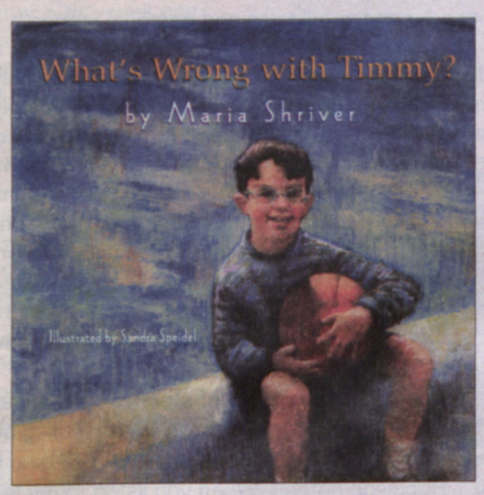
Kids ask simple questions and expect simple answers.

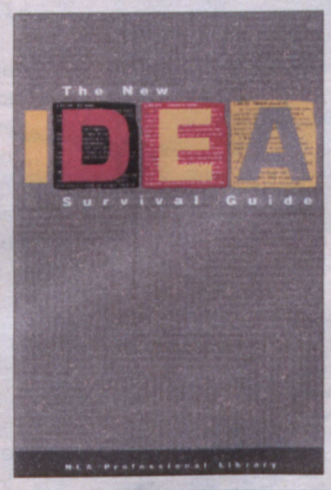
But, how do you give a simple answer to a complex question?

In *What's Wrong with Timmy?* journalist and best-selling author Maria Shriver takes on the complex task of helping children understand and accept other children with disabilities.

In today's inclusive classroom, educators are overwhelmed with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). NEA Professional Library's best-selling book *The New IDEA Survival Guide* helps educators deal with their concerns. Now there's a book to address another need—creating a classroom environment where all children feel accepted.

What's Wrong with Timmy? explores key concepts—like acceptance, understanding and courage—in terms a child can understand. The companion Teacher's Guide is designed to give you ideas on how to share the book with students. You'll find tips on presenting the story, sample discussion questions and engaging follow-up activities.





IDEA Set

2016-2-10-D

NEA Members: $17.95; Nonmembers: $21.90

NOW, for a limited time, you can get *The New IDEA Survival Guide* and *What's Wrong with Timmy?*—the "IDEA Set"—for only $17.95 (member price; $21.90 for nonmembers). Together these books are a perfect complement for dealing with a complex and sensitive issue. Get two sets—give one as a special holiday gift and keep the other for your own library!

Place your order before **DECEMBER 15**, and get a copy of the *What's Wrong with Timmy?* Teachers Guide **FREE!**

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**Shipping and handling will be added to all orders.*

Financial Education for the Young

Q: My daughter is a college senior and knows nothing about personal finance. What could I get her for Christmas that would help her get ready for life on her own?

A: A million dollars? Just kidding. I like Beth Kobliner's *Get a Financial Life*, a book for twenty-somethings that covers the financial basics. You might consider a magazine subscription as well, if you think she'd be interested. And there's a lot of good stuff that's free online.

Perhaps you could make an investing bookmark with Web site addresses. Morningstar, the mutual fund rating service, offers information and advice at www.morningstar.com. Many mutual fund companies also have Web sites. I like the one sponsored by the Vanguard Group at www.vanguard.com because it includes basic investing education and explains the advantages of indexing, or buying market indexes rather than funds that are actively managed by a fund manager. Of course, Vanguard plugs the indexes because it is the major vendor of index funds. Still, I find the information solid.

Many investors like The Motley Fool's site at www.fool.com. Money Central, where I write a column at www.moneycentral.com, offers free tools that help investors screen stocks and funds. And, like many other Web sites, it offers investors the opportunity to set up a dummy portfolio and watch how the stocks are affected by news events. Money Central also has a number of message boards where investors can ask questions about investing. We often have college students who want to get started in our Start Investing newsgroup.

There are advantages and disadvantages to getting information online. What I love about it is that it's personal and anonymous at the same time. People can ask the most basic questions without having to worry that someone is laughing at them or thinking about how little they know. I find the online groups to be pretty free of animosity and hostility. Most people there are eager to learn and eager to help.

The negative is that not all the advice is good advice. Sometimes I'll see a question from a newbie investor asking how he should get started. And then I'll see someone reel off a list of aggressive technology stocks that are totally unsuitable for a beginner. I believe no one should buy stocks just because they're recommended in an online newsgroup.

A better way to use a newsgroup is to bounce off your own ideas. For instance, your daughter might put together a list of mutual funds and then ask the group: What's right and what's wrong with my choices?

Q: We are buying a new home and my husband wants to get a 15-year mortgage. I want a 30-year. What's best?

A: Obviously you can afford the slightly higher payments on a 15-year or you wouldn't be asking the question. So I think it comes down to psychological issues.

Sure there are financial differences. If you go with the 15-year, you'll pay slightly more each month but far, far less over the term of the loan. Yet some investors prefer to go with the 30-year and invest the difference in stocks. They point out, too, that the 30-year brings more tax advantages, since the interest on a home loan is one of the few tax deductions available to middle-income taxpayers.

That's true. But for some people, the 15-year offers big psychological advantages. My husband and I switched to a 15-year loan last year, and we are delighted with it. It makes us feel that we are cleaning up our balance sheet and getting out of debt.

I've heard other homeowners argue that they went with the 30-year because it gives them more options. They can still pay the loan down as quickly as they like. But they're not forced to do so. So if something comes along and they need the money, they've got it. One way for you and your husband to compromise would be to choose the 30-year and then make extra principal payments.

Q: I heard that you should subtract your age from 100 and that whatever is left is the percentage amount you should put into stocks. Do you agree?

A: Not really. The formula is not a bad starting point. As you probably know, stocks are the engine for growth in a portfolio. Bonds are a capital preservation tool. That doesn't mean that you can't lose money in bonds. But bonds are less volatile than stocks. The idea behind the formula is that as you grow older you should shift more of your money into the safety of bonds.

But the formula has become outdated by demographic changes. At age 40, you might live another 60 years and your portfolio needs growth to outpace inflation. I could argue that a 40-year-old—and even a 50-year-old—should have 80 percent of long-term money in stocks. But of course this depends on other factors, such as your risk tolerance, as well. ✔

Mary Rowland is an author and contributor to several financial planning magazines. E-mail your personal finance questions to MoneyQuestions@neamb.com.

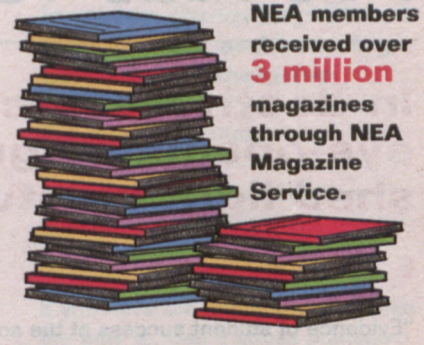
Thrifty Educator

This month's tip comes from Kari Trupkin, a middle school teacher in Miami, Florida.

My seventh grade math students receive a monthly homework calendar and matching assignment packet. This requires an enormous amount of copier paper and a large portion of my time standing at the copier machine. Inevitably, many students lose the packet. After surveying the students, I realized that many of them have computers at home. In one advanced class, everyone owns a computer! I jumped on this opportunity and spoke to the computer teacher. We decided that it would be very easy to scan my homework packet and monthly calendar onto the school Web site and let the students download the homework. This will save a tremendous amount of both paper and time. Students get to use the computer daily. Absent students always know what the homework is. And parent involvement is only a click away.

Got an idea?

If you have a suggestion for how your colleagues can save money at school, send it along to neatoday@nea.org.



Last year, NEA members received over 3 million magazines through NEA Magazine Service.

Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

NEA can help put you on your way to attaining National Board Certification, an increasingly recognized and much valued credential among professional educators. The NEA National Board Certification Loan℠ program provides a special revolving line of credit designed to help cover the $2,300 assessment fee.

With a low annual percentage rate (APR) of 7.9 percent, the loan has no application fees or prepayment penalties, and no collateral is required. To qualify for this special rate, you must be an NEA member. For more information, call 800/603-3953, 8 a.m. to 12 midnight, Monday-Friday; 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday; and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday (ET). Mention source code B6D0.

Looking for that hard-to-find present for a family member, friend, or colleague this holiday season? Your dilemma is solved with the more than 500 magazine choices available to you from NEA Magazine Service℠. Educate, stimulate, and entertain with a gift subscription to popular magazines such as *Discover, Entertainment Weekly, Smithsonian, Money, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, People,* and *Consumer Reports.* Better still, you can save up to 80 percent off newsstand prices! Order online at www.neamb.com, or call 800/968-7624.

The NEA Member Benefits Web site is packed with useful information designed to help members make sound financial decisions: online financial calculators, consumer guides, and articles on financial topics relevant to all stages of life and career. It also offers the convenience of online applications for many products. Register for the monthly Web site giveaways, too! Go to: www.neamb.com.

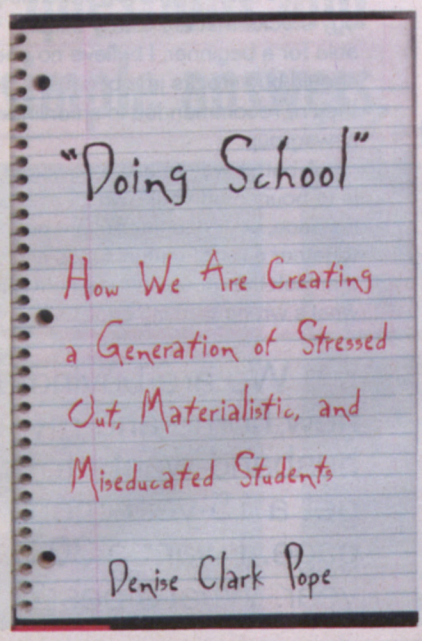
Are Kids Today Just 'Doing School?'

In-depth research and eye-opening vignettes shed light on student life.

EXCERPT

"Evidence of student success at the school is everywhere…Listen to the students, though, and you'll hear a different side of success. To keep up her grades, Eve sleeps just two to three hours each night and lives in a constant state of stress. Kevin faces anxiety and frustration as he attempts to balance the high expectations of his father with his own desire to have a life" outside of school…and both Teresa and Roberto resort to drastic actions when they worry that they will not maintain the grades they need for future careers. All of them admit to doing things that they're not proud of in order to succeed in school."

'Doing School' — How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students
By **Denise Clark Pope**
240 pp. $24.95. To order call 800/987-7323 or go to www.yale.edu/yup/order/html.


"Doing School"
How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students
Denise Clark Pope

The "best and brightest" high school students aren't necessarily engaged in their learning or curriculum. Instead, they spend most of their time and energy learning what kind of behavior gets rewarded in school and devoting themselves to pursuing strategies that lead to high grades and success.

That's the premise behind this new book, written by Stanford University School of Education lecturer Denise Clark Pope after spending one year shadowing five successful students at a well-regarded public high school.

A former high school English teacher, Pope says today's "successful" students are so overworked and focused on "doing" tests and school that they regularly manipulate the system and devise crafty strategies to get the best grades possible.

By using their own words and actions, Pope intimately captures the thoughts and experiences of the students she profiles in their own chapters.

Despite their diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, the students all believe that getting *A's* is of supreme importance and that it is sometimes better to be "system savvy" than it is to actually learn the material.

"What emerges is a double-sided picture of school success," she writes. Our "model" students —with high grades, extracurricular activities, and honors and awards— feel they must compromise their values and manipulate the system to get ahead.

"People don't go to school to learn," asserts Kevin, one of her subjects who is considered a 'best and brightest' by the school. "They go to get good grades which brings them to college, which brings them the high-paying job, which brings them to happiness, so they think. But basically, grades is where it's at."

Pope subtlety reminds us throughout the book what it means to love learning and the excitement that encompasses it—a stark contrast to the students she follows, who have rare encounters with passion and engagement as the daily grind of the school day takes its toll on their health and happiness.

"Most were unable to find a way to succeed in school and still, in their words, 'have a life,'" writes Pope. "They longed to find a balance between work and play. They wanted to resist the pull of the system turning them into robo-students, drudgingly pursuing high marks without necessarily learning the material."

Students today are working harder than ever at grueling routines, she writes, sacrificing sleep and social lives to succeed in school.

The costs of their achievements are "severe anxiety or breakdowns," "persistent health or sleep problems," and ethical compromise in the conflict between their own values and the desire to succeed.

By clearly transporting the reader into the minds and hearts of these adolescents, *Doing School* succeeds at raising critical questions educators and parents can't ignore: What is the pressure to succeed doing to our children? And what can we do to encourage them to love learning as much as we did? ✔

—Dina S. Gómez

Footnote: In the book's epilogue, author Denise Clark Pope gives readers a glimpse into each of the five students' lives after high school. Four of the five are in college, one left college and joined the Army.

BOOKS by NEA Members

Imperfect Strangers
By Claudia Finkelstein

The author is currently a school psychologist working with K-12 students. Her book portrays the relationship between a young criminal and his court-appointed attorney, and is a testimony to a person's ability to grow and change despite formidable odds. Because of some violence and strong language, it is not suitable for children. $3.95 online at www.1stbooks.com or $10.95 plus s&h by calling 888/280-7715.

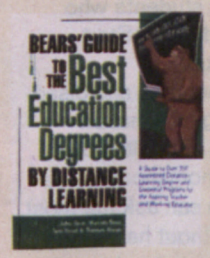
School Bells and Inkwells, Favorite School Stories and More
By Dr. Tee Carr

Everyone who has ever been a teacher or has ever had a teacher will love this book. It is a treasure chest of over 100 favorite school stories written by individuals from all walks of life. Through these inspiring stories, the author reminds us that teaching can be the most important profession in the world because of the impact teachers can have on the lives of their students. 316 pp. $14.95 plus s&h from Carr Enterprises, 3 Belvoir Circle, Chattanooga, TN 37412, or call 423/698-5685.

The Gift
By Alicia Mariscal

This book is based on a true story about a girl who makes a teddy bear (at a teddy bear factory in San Francisco) for her father whom she gets to visit only once per year. Her parents are divorced. It also makes a wonderful coloring book! $5 plus $1.43 s&h. Order by calling 510/530-2295; fax 510/531-1340; E-mail alhiker@yahoo.com; or by mail at 4365 39th Ave., Oakland, CA 94619-1612.

Bears' Guide to the Best Education Degrees by Distance Learning
By Thomas Nixon and others



This book is designed for the teacher and teacher-to-be who needs or wants to earn a credential, B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. but is not able to do it in the traditional campus setting. It provides information on numerous programs that allow students to earn their degrees at a distance. $14.95. Published by Ten Speed Press, P.O. Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707, or call 800/841-BOOK.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

A New Bedtime Story

Children beg for bedtime stories about magic, monsters, war, love,

spirits, castles, sword fights, and even shipwrecks! Oxford's new series, *The Shakespeare Collection*, offers skillfully retold versions of Shakespeare's most popular plays in story book form for children aged 7 to 10. The first four in the series include The Tempest, Hamlet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Macbeth. $12.95 each from Oxford University Press, phone 212/726-6043 or visit www.oup.com.

Good Books

Organized around 44 topics considered to be the most frequently

requested, the end result is chock full of more than 500 annotated book recommendations. Use it to find selections quickly by title, author, or subject, or to encourage young readers to pursue their interests through reading. $32.00 from the American Library Association, phone 1-800-545-2433; press 7. You can also visit www.ala.org/editions.

Quench Your Thirst

Here's an incredible resource for every bookshelf. This reference book is designed to make finding high-quality, incredible information on the Internet a simple, informative, and fun experience. *The learning book, 300 Incredible Things To Learn On The Internet*, features a wealth of information ranging from A to Z, and will help you locate the best Web sites from homework helpers to foreign countries to hundreds of educational and how-to topics. $8.95 from The Spizman Agency, phone 770-953-0850.

Environmental Initiatives

Entitled *Acting for Nature*, this is a remarkable book about young people "acting for nature." You will be

inspired by the stories of 15 young individuals from 11 countries who looked at some environmental problem in each of their communities and decided to do something to help. $9.50 plus $3 shipping per order. Generous discounts for schools. Order from Action for Nature, 2269 Chestnut St., #263, San Francisco, CA 94123; or call 415/421-2640 or go to www.actionfornature.com.

Explore the Natural World

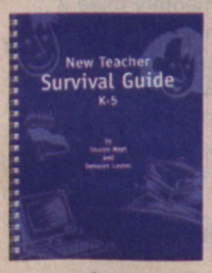
Learn why some animals' eyes glow in the dark. From birds to bees, from sound to light, from heat to ice, kids will spend hours learning and enjoying *The Little Giant® Book of Science Experiments*. Your students can pick and choose from over 300 experiments, each of which introduces fascinating science principles. $6.95 from Sterling Publishing. To order call 800/805-5489 or visit www.sterlingpub.com.

Ghandi Explored

Our Ghandi: Child of Fear introduces children to the life and contributions of this extraordinary leader. Children's illustrations go well with the interactive storytelling about Ghandi's life. $12.95. Available from Nilgiri Press, Box 256, Tomales, CA 94971. Call 800/475-2369.

New Teacher Survival Guide, K-5

By Sharon Hoyt and Deborah Levine



Novice teachers will cherish this hands-on, heads-up handbook of strategies for the always-challenging first year in the classroom. With guidance, examples, and templates, this is an indispensable tool for the first-year teacher and also a rich source of ideas for the classroom veteran. $20 plus s&h. To order, go to www.emelior.com.

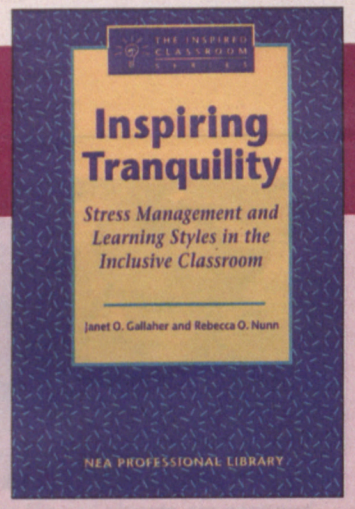
TVTIPS

Walking With Prehistoric Beasts

Discovery Channel, December 9, 2001, 7-10 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Following its record-breaking ratings hit, "Walking With Dinosaurs," the Discovery Channel brings its computer-generated magic to the natural sequel, "Walking With Prehistoric Beasts." Picking up the story of life on Earth just an evolutionary blink after dinosaurs became extinct, "Walking with Prehistoricc Beasts" is a landmark three-hour mini-series coproduced with the BBC that sweeps through time from 49 million BC to 30,000 years ago to explore the rise of mammals.

KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., provides these listings. For additional listings and information, check the Web at www.kidsnet.org.


THE INSPIRED CLASSROOM
Inspiring Tranquility
Stress Management and Learning Styles in the Inclusive Classroom
Janet O. Gallaher and Rebecca O. Nunn
NEA PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

From the NEA Professional Library

Inspiring Tranquility: Stress Management and Learning Styles in the Inclusive Classroom
Rebecca O. Nunn and Janet O. Gallaher
120 pp. $10.95 NEA members
$12.95 nonmembers
#2592-6-00-FN

EXCERPT

The most important stress reliever for teachers and students is the teacher's mind set. How does the teacher make sense of something? How does he or she define it? For example, when teachers understand that the cause of AD/HD is an imbalance of neurochemicals, they know that the student is just trying to survive. . . . We believe that the teacher's mindset affects everything in the classroom. It can make or break a teacher and it can make or break a child.

If you have too much stress to take the time to read a stress management book, *Inspiring Tranquility* is for you. The authors—a teacher and a physical therapist who works in schools—have created a "fun read" that is full of practical information. They've taken important findings from new research on how the brain works and created strategies that help teachers and students initiate the "relaxation response" in stressful classroom situations. By combining stress management and learning styles, this book presents a unique approach to teaching in an inclusive setting.

To order, call 800/229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.

TVTIPS

The Buffalo War

PBS, November 1, 10:00 p.m., ET, check local listings

This program examines the culture clash between Native Americans, ranchers, environmentalists, and government officials, battling over the yearly slaughter of America's last wild bison. The documentary

explores the controversy by joining a 500-mile spiritual march across Montana by Lakota Sioux Indians who object to the slaughter. Along the way, they meet a group of environmental activists and a family of ranchers who must find a way to coexist with buffaloes.

The Other Side of Africa

CNN, CNN Newsroom, week of November 5, 4:30 a.m., ET.

This CNN Newsroom presentation explores some less-exposed aspects of Africa. The program profiles a world of ancient cultures, economic success, and community outreach, looking at the continent's many cultures, ancient architecture and successful industries. Support materials including lesson plans, suggested classroom activities, plus links to maps and resources can be found at www. CNNfyi.com.

War Letters

PBS, November 11, 9:00 p.m., ET.

Based on Andrew Carroll's recent best-seller, *War Letters, Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars*, this one-hour special transcends the subject of war. It explores the love, passion, horror, and hope of men and women who fought and those who waited at home, through a collection of newly uncovered personal letters of soldiers, sweethearts, sons, brothers, fathers, wives, and friends.

The Impressionists: The Road to Impressionism

A&E, November 12-15, 7:00 a.m., ET.

This two-hour special explores the life of the Impressionist art movement and its creators, including Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, and Berthe Morisot, among others. Filmed in Impressionist locales in France and elsewhere, this documentary uses a wide array of paintings, period photographs, beautifully filmed scenes, newspaper reviews, and diary and letter excerpts from the artists themselves. Also included are in-depth interviews with art historians.

Mystery of the Alaskan Mummies

The Discovery Channel, November 18, 9:00 p.m., ET.

Hundreds of mummies have been found in the Aleutian Islands off the Alaskan coast, preserved in much the same way as Egyptian mummies, only in a harsher climate. These mummies, curled in the fetal position, bear testimony to a sophisticated, 9,000-

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CONT1101

year old Unangan culture that once thrived there. This one-hour special presents the first comprehensive look at the Alaskan mummies, their remote island home and the scientists who have charted the fate of the ancient Unangan people.

My Uncle Silas

PBS, November 26, 9:00 p.m., ET.
Based on the popular stories by H.E. Bates, this Exxon/Mobil Masterpiece Theatre presentation tells the story of ten-year-old Edward, who comes to stay with his roguish Uncle Silas for adventures in poaching, courting, drinking, fighting, and occasionally working.

Precious Cargo

PBS, November, check local listings
In conjunction with National Adoption month, this one-hour special follows a group of

Vietnamese young people adopted by American families at the end of the Vietnam War who travel back to their homeland in search of their personal history. While visiting orphanages and maternity hospitals, this documentary also tells the story of Operation Babylift, which brought 2,700 children to America after the war. Viewers are introduced to many of the adoptive parents who began a movement that has grown to redefine the American family by embracing these biracial, sometimes disabled children.

Native American History

CNN, CNN Newsroom, November, 4:30 a.m., ET.
In conjunction with Native American History Month, this CNN Newsroom presentation takes a look at Native Americans past and present, looking specifically at the resurgence of Native American culture in mainstream society. A companion Web site can be found by going to www.CNNfyi.com.

Warship

PBS, November 7 and 14, 9 p.m., ET.
Premiering over two nights, *Warship* brings history to life through a dramatic study of 200 years of technological advances that have shaped modern navies and changed the course of history. From the last great confrontation of wooden warships during the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, to today's sophisticated weaponry, *Warship* illustrates the connections among human ingenuity, history, and technology, revealing how circumstances and need have prompted the evolution of technology which, in turn, has altered history and vice versa.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

In from the Cold

Wondering what to do when your young students are kept in during the

upcoming winter days? *Winter Day Play* may be the answer. The paperback book is full of activities, crafts, and games to keep kids busy learning and having fun—indoors and out. Ages 3 and up. 160 pp. from Chicago Review Press. $13.95.

Science Fair Ideas

Are your students out of original ideas for their student science fair

projects? Here's a batch of 100 fresh science fair projects that students will enjoy doing even as they learn scientific principles. Included in *100 Award-Winning Science Fair Projects* are ideas for building a working sundial and directions for molding a mountain range and then creating a topographic map of it. $21.95 from Sterling Publishing: www.sterling.com. $21.95.

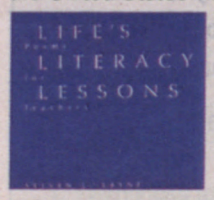
Internet Basics

You can help your students make their way around the Internet with *A Student's Guide to the Internet.*

Chock full of ideas, this handy guide explains the basics. Among the topics: how to conduct searches of the Net's vast resources, and simple ways to create Web sites. Net safety wraps up the 140-page resource from Twenty-First Century Books. $23.90. Go to: Millbrookpress.com.

Learning and Literacy

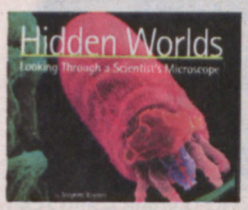
Award-winning educator Steven L. Layne has delighted teachers all over the United States with his poetry



readings and presentations. In his book, *Life's Literacy Lessons: Poems for Teachers*, he has gathered 40 favorite poems about literacy teaching and learning into a collection full of honesty and wit that will touch and inspire educators at all grade levels. 72 pages from the International Reading Association, 302/731-1600. $9.95.

Nature Under A Microscope

You can discover and explore new frontiers in science by looking through the lenses of powerful microscopes to view, for instance, one grain of pollen or the delicate hairs on a blade of grass. *Hidden Worlds—Looking Through a Scientist's Microscope* takes you behind the scenes of a photographer's work and explains how remarkable images of microscopic life and objects are captured. $16 from any bookstore or at www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com.



WEB WINNERS

Talking about Tough Issues

Click on www.talkingwithkids.org for excellent resources to help initiate conversations with your students,

including subjects such as the recent violent attack against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Other topics on this site include drugs, alcohol, HIV/AIDS, and sex.

World Sites

The U.S. Department of State provides information on www.state.gov/travel.cfm that includes travel emergencies and warnings; passport

and visa information; U.S. embassy and consulate Web sites; and many important related links. You can get the most recent current travel guidelines that may come in handy, especially if you plan to travel abroad.

College Savings Programs

You can learn how to save for your kids' college education now and not be caught in a financial bind later. Go to www.collegesavings.org or call the College Savings Plan Network on this Web site.

Consumer Guide

The 2001 Consumer Action Handbook is now available online. It provides advice to consumers on car repair, home improvement and financing, shopping from home, and much more. Also included is the Consumer Assistance Directory, which lists names, addresses, phone numbers, and Web sites of national consumer organizations, trade associations, state and Federal agencies, etc. Go to www.pueblo.gsa.gov/crh/respref.htm.

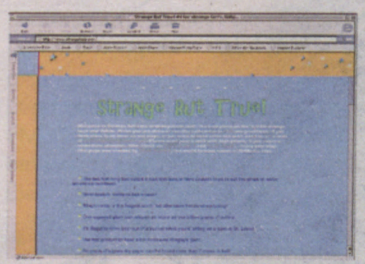
Reading Rockets

This Web site provides practical guidance on teaching kids to read, using

research-based methods. It also provides advice and tips for meeting the needs of struggling readers and what to do if a deeper problem is suspected. Access to some of the research on this subject is offered via links to other helpful sites. Go to www.readingrockets.org.

Strange but True

Did you know that bats always turn left when exiting a cave? Have some



fun with this Web site, which is packed with factoids that it says are—strange but true! Go to www.strangefacts.com.

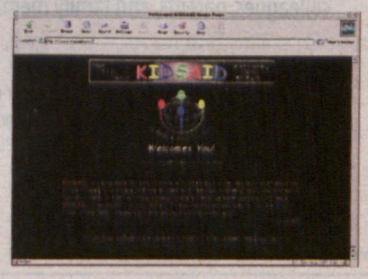
Antique Collecting Guides

These guides provide essential background for both new and seasoned collectors. Featured guides include

Asian ceramics and furniture; clocks; prints; European ceramics and furniture; jewelry; Old Master paintings; and others. Visit www.sothebys.com/connoisseur/guides.

Kids Aid

The KIDSAID Web site is a safe place for kids to share and to help



each other deal with grief about any of their losses. It is a place to share and deal with feelings, to show artwork and stories, to talk about pets, to meet with one's peers. There are also some games and contests. Go to http://kidsaid.com.

Staying Healthy

Get extensive advice on what to do when kids have health problems and

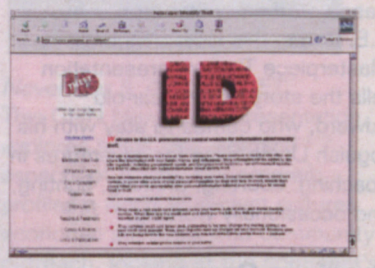
what to do to help keep them healthy in the first place. There are special sections for kids, teens, and parents. This site deals with everything from asthma to hiccups. Visit http://kidshealth.org.

Online Dictionary of Difficult Words

Search the *Hutchinson Dictionary of Difficult Words* A to Z index of almost 14,000 difficult words to increase and improve your vocabulary or to find out exactly what those words really mean! Go to www.lineone. net/dictionaryof/difficultwords/index/html.

Someone Can Steal Your Identity!

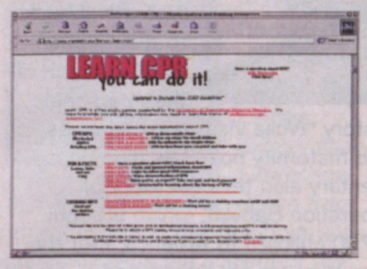
This Web site is the U.S. Government's central Web site for information on identity theft. Learn



how to minimize your risk; what to do if you're a victim; how to file a complaint; and check out other related links. Go to www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

Learn CPR

You can learn the basics of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and learn how to save someone's life at http://



depts.washington.edu/learncpr/index.html. CPR is a no-nonsense lifesaver, and you can get some online instruction at this site. While this site isn't a substitute for live, comprehensive training, the site does offer information about the basics in an illustrated format.

PBS Online

Visit PBS online at www.pbs.org and search this Web site full of art, history, nature, science, travel, and many other topics. There's a kids' PBS link, an adult learning service link, and a teacher source link. Visit the hourly newscast and check TV schedules. You can even reinvent your own class picture!

Kids Search Engine

Kids Click! is a Web search site for kids, designed by librarians. It contains over 600 subjects from current events, the arts, math and science, to entertainment. Go to http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick!

Sheree Rensel, 2001 Chevy Malibu Teaching Excellence Awards Grand Prize Winner

Tell us about an extraordinary teacher.

Enter the 3rd Annual Chevy Malibu Teaching Excellence Awards

Make a difference in a teacher's life by entering him or her to win a 2001 Chevy Malibu. Chevy Malibu is looking to reward teachers who have a profound effect on their students' lives. The Chevy Malibu Teaching Excellence Awards recognizes inspiring classroom educators who are the best of the best – those whose high standards, enthusiasm and passion for teaching enhance school classrooms and local communities. These people not only are role models for their students, but connect with colleagues, parents, and family members as well.

You can reward an excellent teacher and enter them to win a 2001 Chevy Malibu before February 1, 2002*. Thank them for their hard work and dedication with the car they can depend on every day – Chevy Malibu.

Call 1-800-777-8600 or visit www.timeforteachers.com for more information.

For more information on Chevy Malibu visit www.chevy.com

CHEVY MALIBU WE'LL BE THERE

*No purchase of any kind is necessary to enter or win. See Official Rules in the back of TIME For Teachers. Contest begins at 12:01 A.M. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on 9/1/01 and ends at 11:59 P.M. (EST) on 2/1/02. Contest is open to all teachers of Pre-K through Grade 12. Void where prohibited by law. One entry per certified teacher. U.S., Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico residents only, 21 years of age or older, who possess a valid driver's license. [MSRP 20,325]. Actual Grand Prize vehicle may vary from photograph.

Cartoonist View

Editorial cartoonists' pens respond to terrorism with gripping insight and a biting wit. You'll find a diverse collection from a variety of artists

expressing everything from sympathy to outrage, including a selection from international publications. http://cagle.slate.msn.com/news/attack/main.asp

Fly the Flag

Here's a way to put a patriotic reminder on your desktop. It's free from Rhode Island Soft Systems.

"We Will Not Forget" as a free downloadable screensaver showing the American flag waving in the breeze. Go to: www.screensaver.com/wwnf.htm.

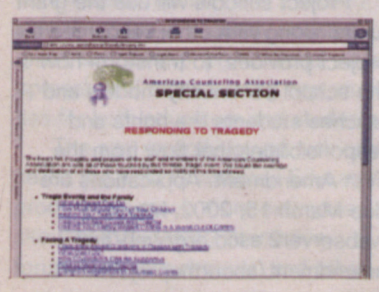
Toward Understanding

W.H. Auden's poem "September 1, 1939" may have been written in response to Germany's invasion of

Poland on that date. But the many people who've passed it around the Net via E-mail find an uncanny relevance to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Here's the poet's home in cyberspace. Go to: www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?prmID=121.

Help for Kids

The American Counseling Association, expressing concern about the emotional and psychological after-effects of the terrorist attacks, provides some tips on how to help children cope with traumatic situations and, if necessary, how to find professional assistance. Go to: www.counseling.org/tragedy/tragedy.htm.



Relief from Disasters

From the Federal Emergency Management Association comes this site to help kids understand

how to be prepared for disasters and how disaster damage can be prevented. You can also learn what causes disasters, play games, read stories, and become a Disaster Action Kid. Go to: www.fema.gov/kids.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UniServ Internships

As part of an ongoing commitment to state and local affiliates, the NEA is seeking potential eligible candidates for the 2002 UniServ intern program. Individuals who successfully complete the 4 1/2-week training program and the three-month field experience will be certified by the NEA as eligible for UniServ staff work in an NEA state or local affiliate.

All individuals must be committed to moving for the three-month field experience.

Requirements:

1. Female or ethnic minority as designated by the United States census.
2. Active NEA member for at least one year.
3. Basic knowledge and understanding of the Association at the local/state level.
4. Committed to pursuing UniServ staff employment upon successful completion of the program.
5. Excellent interpersonal skills.
6. Willingness to participate in intensive training.
7. Willingness to resign all Association offices at the local, state, and national level.
8. Willingness to work in a learning environment during day and evening hours and learn new skills and attitudes.

The NEA does not guarantee employment of UniServ staff; employment is a state/local decision.

Interested persons should send a letter of interest to:

Brenda Vincent, UniServ Intern Program, NEA membership and affiliates, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

All letters of interest must be received at the NEA by December 7, 2001 by United States mail or FedEx. Faxed copies will not be accepted.

An application packet along with basic instructions will be sent after a letter of interest is received at the NEA office starting December 3, 2001. The deadline for applications is January 31, 2002.

For more information, call your local UniServ director.

Violence in Perspective

Educators for Social Responsibility, a national organization dedicated to making teaching social responsibility a core practice in education, has developed a free guide called "Talking to Children About Violence and Other Sensitive and Complex Issues in the World." This guide, available at www.esrnational.org, provides answers to parents' and teachers' questions about how to discuss violent national and world events with children.

Grandparents Day Kit

Boost family involvement in your school and build closer connections across generations through the national "Something to Remember Me By" Legacy Project. There's a Grandparents Day Activity Kit that includes K-12 activities, a planning guide for a school event, curriculum connections, reproducibles, and more. There's also a new Holiday Activity Kit. And for the Holiday Essay Contest, students can write about their family history. The grand prize is a Lane cedar chest with handcrafted keepsakes made by older adult artisans from Geezer.com. Kits free online at www.somethingtoremembermeby.org, or for info call 800/772-7765.

Fulbright Scholar Program

The Fulbright Scholar Program for faculty and professionals is offering more than 70 awards in education for lecturing and/or doing research abroad during the 2001-02 academic year. For more information, visit the Web site at www.iie.org/cies. U.S. citizenship is required. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the Fulbright agency or U.S. embassy in their home countries. The Fulbright Scholar Program is sponsored by the United States Depart-ment of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and administered by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, 3007 Tilden St., N. W., Suite 5L, Washington, DC 20008-3009, 202/686-7877; Fax 202/362-3442, www.iie.org/ cies.

Teachers Talking about Learning

Join teachers from around the globe to explore ideas, discuss issues, and take actions about their learning experiences with students. Teachers Talking About Learning is a Web site sponsored by UNICEF to support the professional development of teachers around the world. Go to www.unicef.org/teachers/.

Keeping Current

Written by a team of educators and *Time* editors, the *Time* school publishing program uses a cross-curricular guide to analyze social studies, history, government, economics, and science events covered in *Time* Magazine. Weekly copies of *Time* are available to participating classes at a discounted rate. For more information, or to subscribe, call 800/882-0852.

Fulbright Memorial Fund

To date, 2,900 American primary and secondary school teachers and administrators have been selected to participate in a unique three-week study-visit to Japan sponsored by the Fulbright Memorial Fund Program (FMF).

This year, the program will identify another 600 teachers who are interested in integrating international experience into the classroom and send them on the 2002 trips. The FMF Teacher Program, which is fully funded by the Japanese government, aims to increase understanding between Japan and the United States by exposing American teachers to the educational system and culture of Japan. The FMF program is designed to extend far beyond the educators who participate. Participants are asked to commit themselves to sharing what they have learned with their students, colleagues and schools.

Primary and secondary school teachers and administrators are encouraged to submit applications for the 2002 FMF study visits (June, October, and November).

Interested individuals may request a 2002 application packet by calling the Institute of International Education at888/527-2636 or by visiting www.iie.org/pgms/fmf/. The deadline for applications is December 18, 2001.

Sorting It Out

Oceans of information spill into our students' hands daily. The question is what to do with all of it. The George Lucas Educational Foundation suggests an article by NEA member Nancy Schrock that teaches students how to question, search, evaluate, and properly cite information they find both on and offline. Go to: http://glef.org/illiteracy.html.

Plays Like a Girl

The phrase "playing like a girl" has taken on a whole new meaning. Once used as an insult on the elementary school playground, it is now

the driving force behind Jane Gottesman's new book *Game Face, What Does a Female Athlete Look Like?*

The book contains pictures of female athletes compiled by Gottesman.

It includes work by some of America's most celebrated photographers, including Dorothea Lange and Ansel Adams.

Calling All Student 'Cooks'

Newman's Own, the charitable foundation set up by actor Paul Newman, is giving young people a chance to change the world.

This fall, Newman's Own is launching a community-action program to encourage charitable entrepreneurship and innovative giving. The first annual "Cookin' Up a Better World" program challenges high school students in the Northeast to develop a creative "recipe for success" that will change their local communities.

Newman's Own is challenging students to think "outside the box" and come up with imaginative ways to either raise money or uniquely serve a charitable organization. Newman's Own will recognize the most creative ideas by either matching the funds raised or by making a contribution to the charity in the school's name. Newman's Own will award 24 grants, ranging in value from $250 to $1,000 each. These grants will fund local community action programs and will put the winning students' plans into action. All high schools in New York and New England are eligible. Deadline is December 7, 2001.

To find out more information, call the "Cookin' Up a Better World" hotline at 888/241-3215 or log on to www.newmansown.com or www.youthmedia.com for details.

AAUW Fellowships

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation's Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Fellowships program rewards the work of outstanding women public school teachers by supporting their professional development and by funding projects designed to promote gender equity in classrooms and schools.

This year, their professional development fellowships will provide up to $5,000 to fund attendance at the five-day Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Institute and Forum on Educational Equity held in July 2002 in Washington, DC; support additional professional development activities (such as workshops, courses, conferences); and provide seed money for planning a gender-equity school-based program. Application deadline: January 10, 2002. Go to www.aauw.org/3000/fdnfelgra/ertf.html.

GRANTS/AWARDS

Free Speech

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) provides grants of up to $10,000 to support innovative school and/or community-based programs that promote education and equity for women and girls.

Women of color and women from other under-represented groups are especially encouraged to apply. Application deadline: January 15, 2002. Go to www.aauw.org/3000/fdnfelgra/cag.html.

First Amendment Grants

The First Amendment Schools project, co-sponsored by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the First Amendment Center, will award ten grants of $12,000 each.

Project schools will use the grant funds, along with other resources the project provides, to transform how the school community models and teaches students the rights and responsibilities that flow from the First Amendment. Applications are due March 15, 2002. http://webserver2.ascd.org/web/firstamendment/abouttheproject.cfm.

Who is Horace Mann?

We have a plan designed for you.

The first step in building is developing a clear blueprint. Fuzzy sketches won't do. It's the same with homeowners insurance.

Horace Mann wants to construct a protection plan for you. We've underwritten the NEA Homeowners® Insurance Program for more than 30 years. And as an NEA member, you receive special benefits.

To find out more about the NEA Homeowners® Insurance Program, call your local Horace Mann agent. Or call 1-800-999-1030 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday CST.

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DIVERSITY Calendar

November

American Indian Heritage Month
November has been proclaimed American Indian Heritage Month so that we may honor the unique heritage of our continent's first inhabitants. It is also a time to remember all of the contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives. For information on Native American heritage, go to www.duncanville.k12.tx.us/mautry/diversity/nativeamericanheritage.htm.

November 16—Ramadan, First Day
November 16 is the beginning of the Islamic holy month in which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset each day. It is the holiest period of Islam, and it honors the revelation of the Koran. For more information on Islam and Ramadan, visit www.iad.org.

November 18-24—National Family Week
Since 1976, Congress has designated the week emcompassing Thanksgiving as National Family Week. It is a time to recognize and appreciate families and their role in caring for individual members, contributing to a strong society. Visit www.familyweek.org.

December

December 10-17—Hanukkah
The Jewish holiday of Hanukkah (the Festival of Lights) begins at sunset on December 9. It is primarily a children's festival—a time for fun, songs, games, and gift-giving. Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Temple by the Maccabees. Visit www.imagitek.com/chanukah.html.

December 25—Christmas
December 25 celebrates the birth of Christ. It is a federal holiday celebrated in all states and territories. Go to www.holidays.net/christmas for the story of Christmas and many other links.

December 26-January 1—Kwanzaa
Kwanzaa is the African-American seven-day spiritual festival dedicated to seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. The American celebration is related to the spirit and rituals of the harvest festivals of Africa. Visit www.officialkwanzaa website.org.

Technology Grants
Information on up-to-the-minute grant programs, funding sources, and technology funding is available at www.eschoolnews.org/funding.

K-12 Funding Opportunities
Here's an all-purpose source of K-12 funding opportunities with links to grantseeking for teachers, learning technology, and more. Go to http://fdncenter.org/pnd/ 20000328/funding.html.

Ed Department Grants
Along with a wealth of other information, the United States Department of Education Web site provides comprehensive information on applying for grants and listings of current funding opportunities. Go to www.ed.gov/funding.html.

From Toyota
Toyota USA Foundation offers grants to non-profit organizations for projects which increase the productivity of students and/or educators, primarily in the areas of math and science. Applications are reviewed continually (no deadline). Go to www.toyota.com/about/community_care/usa_foundation/index.html. Call 310/618-6766.

For Teachers, Kids
The online version of *Technology & Learning* magazine contains a grants and contests section with a searchable database of regularly updated grant, scholarship, professional development, and other funding opportunities for both educators and students.

The site recently joined with one called the Well Connected Educator, producing a much more extensive site that includes an interactive forum, software reviews, and other resources. Published eight times a year. Go to www.techlearning.com.

Key Contact
The Foundation Center is an independent nonprofit information clearinghouse on grants available throughout the United States. With headquarters in New York and additional libraries in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Cleveland, and San Francisco, the center offers publications including directories of foundation and corporate grantmakers, research advice, custom research, and database searching. The Web site includes online training in grantseeking, proposal writing, and funding research, as well as an online librarian. Go to www.fdncenter.org or E-mail library@fdncenter.org, or call 800/424-9836 or 212/620-4230. The Foundation Center is at 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003-3076.

Student Scholarships
FastWEB is the largest online scholarship search site available, with 400,000 scholarships representing over one billion in scholarship dollars. FastWEB provides students with accurate, regularly updated information on scholarships, grants, and fellowships suited to their goals and qualifications, all at no cost to the student. Go to www.fastweb.com or E-mail webmaster@fastweb.com or call 847/785-8000.

In One Place
There's a collection of resources and tips to help K-12 educators apply for and obtain special grants for a variety of projects. This site offers various fundraising ideas, sample proposals, grant-writing tips and scholarship information. For information, go to www.schoolgrants.org or E-mail: help@schoolgrants.org.

Worth Seeing
WestEd is a non-profit research, development and service agency dedicated to improving education and other opportunities for children, youth and adults. The funding, grants and reports section of their Web site provides a listing of corporate and foundation grant sources, publications, and links to grant information on the Web, as well as "Tips on preparing a successful proposal." www.wested.org/tie/grant.html.

Online and in Print
Electronic Learning is a pull-out section of *Instructor Magazine*, and is also distributed separately. *Instructor Magazine* focuses on the use of technology in the classroom. The EL Web site will soon be expanded to include grant information. Go to www. teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor.htm or E-mail InstructorEditor@scholastic.com.

Useful Tech News
Multimedia Schools is a print magazine published five times a year that addresses multiple technologies used in K-12 schools today. Selected full-text content is now available online, along with a NewsWatch section, which posts technology-related funding news and links. Go to www.infotoday.com/MMSchools.

Corning Dollars
The Corning Foundation educational grants support community service programs for students, curriculum enrichment, student scholarships, facility improvement, and instructional technology projects for the classroom. The Foundation directs resources primarily toward initiatives that improve the quality of life near Corning locations. Each year, the Foundation fulfills approximately 225 grants totaling $2,250,000. www.corning. com/inside_corning/foundation.asp.

Curriculum Help
Polaris specializes in grant programs for curriculum development. They also work with non-profits and health care organizations to fund clinics or health education programs. Polaris provides how-to instruction and training in grants acquisition. Polaris also provides technical assistance about grant funding, and online advice at polarisgrantscentral.net.

Science/Technology
The NEC Foundation of America gives grants to those organizations and programs with a national reach and impact in science and technology education, principally at the secondary level, or technology used to assist people with disabilities. Application deadlines are March 1 and September 1. The application process takes six months. Go to www.nec.com/company/foundation.

Sun Grants
Sun Microsystems Foundation Open Gateway Grants Program provides hardware and software grants, training, and technical support to assist schools, particularly in economically disadvantaged communities, in making the transition to network computing and in utilizing networked based tools that improve instruction and student outcomes. The grants also promote the full integration of technology into the curriculum. www.sun.com/aboutsun/comm_invest/ogp/index.html. E-mail: corpaffrs@corp.sun.com.

in the Light Lane

A Mirror Image

My second graders were very excited about a new bulletin board they were going to help me create.

As a correlation to our reading story on growing and changing, each student was to bring a baby picture to class to be displayed on the board. I carefully explained that the pictures were to be kept private so we could guess which classmate matched with each baby picture. I also discussed that bringing a younger picture would make the guess more difficult than bringing in an older picture.

The toddler picture, I explained, would be more easily identifiable. The next morning, one of my shy boys came to my desk and secretly slid a picture into my hands. The picture was of himself at about six months old. He said, "Mrs. Cassidy, I'm very sorry to tell you this,but I really have always pretty much looked like myself."

"Well thank goodness for that!" was all I could say.

Christine Cassidy
Lafayette, Louisiana

A couple of years ago my daughter, then age 11, heard me discuss different learning styles. I carefully explained about visual, auditory, and tactile learners.

A few days later, she came up to me excitedly and said, "Hey, Mom, I can learn by all three learning methods!" I asked which three she was thinking of, and she answered, "Auditory, visual and mandatory."

Susan Hennies
Davis, California

A few years back the mayor of our town was invited to come to our school and speak to the second graders about his job. He explained some of his duties, going to town meetings, making important decisions about town events, creating town laws, and also that he could marry people. He said that he might marry five or ten people each year.

During the question-and-answer period after he spoke, one little boy asked, "How do you have time to spend with all of your families if you're married to so many people?"

Sue Mayer
Vernon, New Jersey

On the first day of school in our town, kindergarten parents get to ride on the bus with their child. While the child goes to the classroom to meet his/her new teacher and classmates, the parents gather in the cafeteria for a social/informational time with staff and other parents.

My granddaughter, Kaitie, proudly and rather confidently kissed her mom and dad goodbye, but before heading down the corridor to her classroom, she asked, "Will you be waiting for me in the 'bacteria'?"

Margery Mars
North Monmouth, Maine

Sixth graders do such goofy things. While students were taking turns reading a story out loud in class, I noticed a student in the back of the room not paying any attention. He was sitting sideways in his desk with his right ankle propped up on his left knee. He was wearing athletic socks and was engrossed in unraveling the elastic in his sock.

Not only was he unraveling the elastic, he was wrapping it around his head and back around his foot until he was caught in a spider web of elastic.

Eventually, other students started noticing although no one said a word. When "our spider" finally broke his concentration, he turned his entangled head to a classroom of grinning faces.

Claire Gammon
Cedartown, GA

Students in my high school geometry class often complain that there are so many theorems, formulas, and properties to learn that it taxes their memory.

To ease the way for them as well as to liven things up in the classroom, I use a lot of mnemonic devices. One day even the most reluctant learners perked up when I said "Today we are going to learn about SIN and SEX."

I admit that the excitement died down a bit when I elaborated … "Yes, the Sum of the INterior angles and the Sum of the EXterior angles of a polygon!"

Arlene Yolles
Westport, Connecticut

A colleague who teaches kindergarten was doing end-of-the year testing with her students. "Remember to keep your eyes on your own papers," she reminded her class. "Please don't look at your neighbor's work."

One 6-year-old raised his hand and said, "But Mrs. Smith, none of my neighbors are even in this class."

Karen Williams
Mesa, Arizona

I was in a preschool classroom at Rock River School to help with a minor problem.

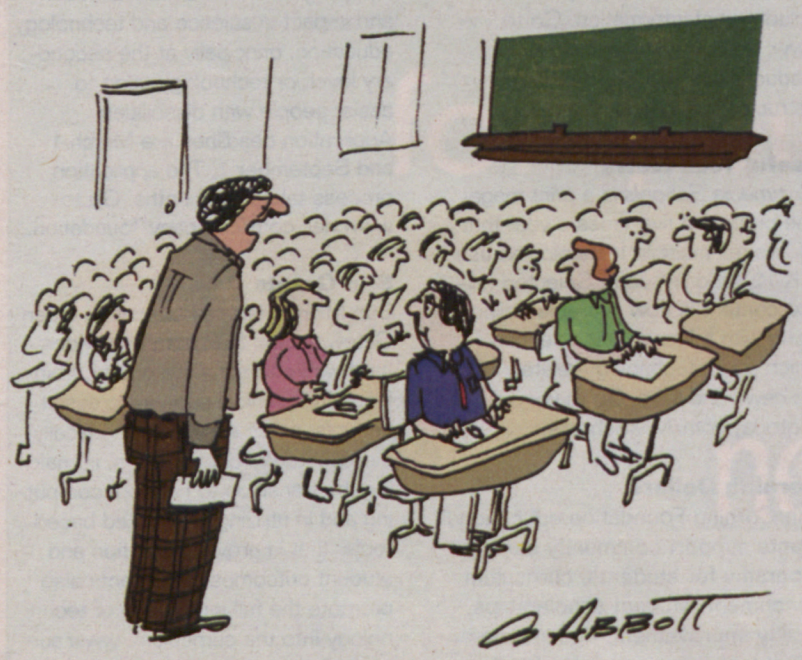
Waiting for a child to settle down, I was observing three coloring shapes. I asked a little boy what color was the circle and he proudly responded, "green."

I asked a little girl what color was the square and she correctly told me "red." I asked the third child what color was the box and she knew right away and said "blue."

Just then I felt this little tap on my shoulder and I turned to see a little boy with this very worried expression on his face.

He said to me, "Gee mister, you sure don't know your colors very well, do you?"

John Southard,
Rockford, Illinois



"That's very thoughtful of you, Byron, but I can't accept your early retirement even if it does relieve the overcrowding."

Can I Quote You?

Every week in my fourth grade class we have a Word of the Week and a Quote of the Week. If the author of the quote is unknown we say the quote is by anonymous.

One day a student said aloud, "That anonymous sure did say a lot of good things."

Laura Drake
Carney, Oklahoma

I usually have a soda each day. One of my first graders came up to me and told me, "Miss Ebersole, if you keep drinking pop then your teeth are going to turn soggy."

I just laughed and asked, "soggy, are you sure?" He thought about it for a brief second then changed his answer, "I mean they will rust."

Kimberly Ebersole
Wichita, Kansas

Timmy was "wool-gathering," so I snapped him to attention by addressing him, "Hey, Kiddo!" The next time I called on him, I said, "Tim …" He replied cleverly, "I think I want to be Kiddo."

Max Harless
High Point, North Carolina

I teach first grade and one day I asked a student who'd been absent if he'd been sick.

He told me, "No, I wasn't sick. My mommy couldn't find her purse, and then when she found it, she didn't have time to put on her eyelashes, so I had to stay home." I think this tops all the excuses I've heard in my career.

Mary Jane Fizer
Woodbridge, Virginia

Got Laughs?

● Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share with other NEA members? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," NEA Today, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036. Fax: 202/822-7206. Send E-mail to neatoday@nea.org.

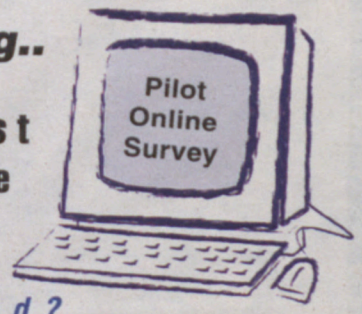
● Want a classroom chuckle delivered to your E-mail box once a week? Subscribe to the new "In the Light Lane" mailing list. Just send an E-mail to join-lightlane@list.nea.org (no subject or message needed).

Marketplace

Announcements

Announcing..

A Pilot Test for NEA online surveys



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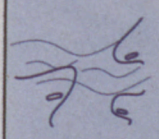

Problems With The Air in Your School?

The NEA Health Information Network supports the use of EPA's *Tools for Schools Action Kit* to prevent and manage indoor air quality problems. The kit includes guidance, a problem solving wheel, and video. Available for $25. To order please call 202/512-1800 (order #055-00000563-0)

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The Education Technology Promotion Guide from the Software Publishers Association offers guidelines for publishing the success of your educational technology program. A CD-ROM includes letter and press release templates in both MAC and PC formats. To obtain a copy for your local Association, E-mail name, address and name of local to Shelstar@aol.com.

Web Sites

Don't forget to visit the NEA Member Benefits Web site. Log onto www.neamb.com and discover the power of information at your fingertips. All the latest NEA Member Benefits information is just a click away. You can access program updates, current rates, special offers and announcements, Web Site highlights-and more!

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